



UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA
Faculdade de Motricidade Humana



**COACHING ABROAD: TEACHING THE GAME DEVELOPING A YOUTH SOCCER PLAN FROM
THE U.S. FIELD**

A Logbook of an experience as a coach at Global Premier Soccer, Charleston, South Carolina, United
States of America

Internship Report submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the masters title in
Sports Coaching

Advisor: Master Óscar Miguel Farias Fialho Tojo

Jury:

President: Doctor Fernando Paulo Oliveira Gomes

Vogals: -Doctor José Maria Dionísio Calado Pratas

-Master Óscar Miguel Farias Fialho Tojo

Diogo André Direitinho Nunes de Almeida

2018

Soccer internship report presented to Faculdade de Motricidade Humana, as a requirement to obtain the masters title in Sports Coaching, with technical and scientific orientation, guided by professor Óscar Tojo.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, thank you Mom! For providing me the opportunities to pursue my objectives, keeping the standards high, demanding the best of myself every day. To my father, for dawned a huge passion and addiction to sports, concretely to soccer. To my brother, for being always me reference of work and success. To my family that directly contributed to the conclusion of this document.

A big thank you to Global Premier Soccer, for providing me the opportunity to coach abroad, welcoming and giving me the conditions to work towards success. A very enrich experience in a personal and professional level, that contributed a lot for my development.

To the teachers Óscar Tojo and Ricardo Duarte for the support and cooperation during this journey, guiding and allowing me to conclude this paper.

To my Friends, that supported me during this period. They made me believe that success would come after hard work, although I would need to be ambitious, raising the expectations.

To conclude, a massive thank you to the institution that gave me a diversity of knowledge, making me better prepared to face the challenges every day. It is my “second home”. Thank you, Faculdade de Motricidade Humana.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this report consists in describing personal experiences and feelings about a coaching activity working abroad. It is intended to explain and reflect on a daily activity as a coach of youth soccer, with self-reflections about his performance and behaviors.

The first area of this paper includes a logbook, defining some training and competitive moments. It reports some feelings, experiences and thoughts during the activity, with the purpose of make a self-reflection about the event every day.

Following that, it was analyzed the planning of a season, of the three different age groups, detailed research in each practice while taking into consideration the time planed for each exercise: SAQ, Playful, Technical exercises, Fundamental Forms, Complementary Forms and Regular game. Associating the data obtained with the development stages of the athletes and game formats, it was proposed an adjustment to the youth soccer planning.

In conclusion, it is mentioned the characterization, description and balance of an event developed by the internship group. The soccer day at Faculdade de Motricidade Humana with the theme “Training to compete: the different dimensions of the football training process”. This event provided the opportunity of knowledge and experiences sharing between youth and professional coaches.

Key-words: Soccer, Coaching, Logbook, Youth development, Teaching the game, Game principles, Planning model, Internship, Personal knowledge, Training model.

RESUMO

O objetivo deste relatório consiste em descrever uma experiência pessoal e os sentimentos de um treinador no estrangeiro. Uma reflexão sobre a rotina diária do treinador de futebol juvenil, com autorreflexões sobre os seus comportamentos e desempenho.

A primeira área inclui um diário de bordo, narrando alguns momentos de treino e competitivos. Sentimentos, experiências e pensamentos durante a atividade, com o objetivo de uma autorreflexão diária sobre o dia.

De seguida, foi analisado o planeamento de uma época, de três escalões diferentes, com uma análise detalhada sobre cada unidade de treino, tendo em consideração o tempo planeado para cada uma das seguintes categoria de exercícios: coordenação motora, recreativo, técnico, formas fundamentais, formas complementares e jogo regular. Posteriormente, foi realizada uma associação com os estádios de desenvolvimento dos atletas e formatos de jogo, sendo proposta uma adaptação para o modelo de futebol juvenil.

Em conclusão, é descrito um evento realizado pelo grupo de estágio. O dia do futebol na Faculdade de Motricidade Humana, com o tema: Treinar para competir: as diferentes dimensões do processo de treino. Este evento proporcionou a partilha de conhecimentos e experiências entre treinadores de futebol juvenil e profissional.

Palavras-chave: Futebol, Treino, Diário de bordo, Desenvolvimento de jovens, Ensino do jogo, Princípios de jogo, Modelo de planeamento, Estágio, Conhecimento pessoal, Modelo de treino.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	10
1.1. Contextualization of the internship	10
1.1.1. Club/Company	10
1.1.2. Conditions/Facilities	11
1.1.3. Competition.....	11
1.2. Objectives.....	15
1.3. SWOT Analysis.....	16
1.3.1. Strategies to Implement	17
1.4. Structure of the document	18
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	19
2.1. The game	19
2.2. Development stages.....	22
2.3. The Coach	24
2.4. Logbook	28
3. THE LOGBOOK OF A COACH WORKING ABROAD: A SELF-REFLECTION.....	29
3.1. Introduction	29
3.2. Logbook	29
3.2.1. Spring 2017 Season.....	29
3.2.2. Summer 2017 Season.....	43
3.3. Reflection	55
4. PURPOSE OF INTERVENTION ON THE YOUTH SOCCER MODEL: A GUIDING DOCUMENT	57
4.1. Introduction	57
4.2. Methodology	58
4.3. Sample.....	59

4.4. Data Analysis	59
4.4.1. 7v7 game format.....	59
4.4.2. 9v9 game format.....	65
4.4.3. 11v11 game format.....	71
4.5. Reflection/Conclusion.....	77
4.6. Innovation/Practical suggestion	86
5. TRAINING TO COMPETE: THE DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS OF THE TRAINING PROCESS IN SOCCER	90
5.1. Introduction	90
5.2. Event Description.....	90
5.3. Event.....	92
5.4. Balance	95
6. CONCLUSION/FINAL THOUGHTS	96
7. REFERENCES	98

TABLES INDEX

Table 1. Fall 2016 season competitive schedule.....	12
Table 2. Spring 2017 season competitive schedule	13
Table 3. Summer 2017 season competitive schedule	14
Table 4. Fall 2017 season competitive schedule.....	15
Table 5. Association between phases, forms and technical-tactical actions.....	20
Table 6. Coaching objectives for developing athletes' outcomes in different contexts	26
Table 7. Game domain levels	58
Table 8. Time and percentage of each exercise category.	59
Table 9. Time and percentage of each technical action.	60
Table 10. Time and percentage of each phase.	60
Table 11. Time and percentage of the numerical relation.	60
Table 12. Time and percentage of each exercise category.	61
Table 13. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.....	61
Table 14. Time and percentage of the number of attackers.....	61
Table 15. Time and percentage of each phase.	62
Table 16. Time and percentage of each exercise category.	62
Table 17. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.....	63
Table 18. Time and percentage of the number of attackers.....	63
Table 19. Time and percentage of each phase.	63
Table 20. Time and percentage of each exercise category.	64
Table 21. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.....	64
Table 22. Time and percentage of the number of attackers.....	64
Table 23. Time and percentage of each phase.	65
Table 24. Time and percentage of each exercise category.	65
Table 25. Time and percentage of each technical action.	66
Table 26. Time and percentage of each phase.	66
Table 27. Time and percentage of each numerical relation.	66
Table 28. Time and percentage of each exercise category.	67
Table 29. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.....	67
Table 30. Time and percentage of the number of attackers.....	67

Table 31. Time and percentage of each phase.	68
Table 32. Time and percentage of each exercise category.	68
Table 33. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.....	69
Table 34. Time and percentage of the number of attackers.....	69
Table 35. Time and percentage of each phase.	69
Table 36. Time and percentage of each exercise category.	70
Table 37. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.....	70
Table 38. Time and percentage of the number of attackers.....	70
Table 39. Time and percentage of each phase.	71
Table 40. Time and percentage of each exercise category.	71
Table 41. Time and percentage of each technical action.	71
Table 42. Time and percentage of each phase.	72
Table 43. Time and percentage of each numerical relation.	72
Table 44. Time and percentage of each exercise category.	73
Table 45. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.....	73
Table 46. Time and percentage of the number of attackers.....	73
Table 47. Time and percentage of each phase.	74
Table 48. Time and percentage of each exercise category.	74
Table 49. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.....	75
Table 50. Time and percentage of the number of attackers.....	75
Table 51. Time and percentage of each phase.	75
Table 52. Time and percentage of each exercise category.	76
Table 53. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.....	76
Table 54. Time and percentage of the number of attackers.....	76
Table 55. Time and percentage of each phase.	77
Table 56. Association between the offensive game specific principles, forms and constraints. ..	79
Table 57. Association between the defensive game specific principles, forms and constraints... 80	
Table 58. Association between the offensive team's principles, forms and constraints.	81
Table 59. Association between the defensive team's principles, forms and constraints.....	82
Table 60. Association between the sectoral work, forms and constraints.	84
Table 61. Association between the intersectoral work, forms and constraints.	85

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Contextualization of the internship

In August 2016, I accepted the offer to go abroad and work for Global Premier Soccer, in the region of Charleston, South Carolina, United States of America. This opportunity emerged after I had sent my *Curriculum Vitae* in answer of a job announcement, and successfully passed in the interviews and requirements. Along with that, I have done my internship in the club GPS NASA during the Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Summer 2017 and Fall 2017 seasons, from August 2016 to December 2017. Throughout this period, I have coached multiple teams and age groups. I was simultaneous the head coach of the U9, U10 and U13 age groups during the Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 seasons. In the Summer 2017, I have been head coach of the U9 GPS Carolina Elite Team and assistant coach of the U16 GPS Carolina Elite Team. Lastly, the head coach of the U9, U11 and U14 teams in the Fall 2017 season.

1.1.1. Club/Company

Global Premier Soccer (GPS) is a soccer club founded in Massachusetts, in 2001. Originally named Massachusetts Premier Soccer, it changed to the actual name in 2012. In 2014 has begun an extensive partnership with Bayern Munich, becoming the official North American partner. Nowadays, GPS covers 23 states in America, plus Canada, Puerto Rico, Spain and United Kingdom. The mission of the club is to be a leader in the development and growth of soccer across North America and beyond. Establish an identify of excellence, pursuing the pathway to success on and off the field. The primary focus is being the development of players and people, who can compete at the highest level of soccer around the world.

GPS Carolina is the club that oversees the clubs in the states of South Carolina and North Carolina, based in different locations. The club runs an Elite program with the purpose of bringing the best players from within our Global Premier Soccer network of clubs to compete on elite-level teams during the summer months. I coached two of the GPS Carolina Elite – Charleston teams during this period.

During the Fall and Spring seasons, I am coaching in the club GPS NASA (North Area Soccer Association), based in North Charleston. The club has 33 teams from the U8 to the U19 age groups, boys and girls (24 are boys teams, 9 are girls teams). The teams are differentiated in tiers: 1st team – maroon; 2nd team – white; 3rd team – black. In addition to the travel soccer program,

the club also runs different programs like recreational soccer, juniors programs and summer camps, that I had the opportunity to get involved.

1.1.2. Conditions/Facilities

The club GPS NASA has associations with various high schools, supporting their soccer programs providing playing opportunities to the students. The schools Cathedral Academy and R.B. Stall High School allow the club to use their facilities to practice. The space available is: two baseball fields, two softball fields, two football fields and one multi-purpose field with capacity to fit two 11v1 fields. All the fields have grass surface, with a total capacity to fit: four 11v11, three 7v7 and one 9v9 fields.

The practices are from Monday to Thursday, from 6pm to 8.30pm, with an hour of Technical Training on Fridays (combined session available for the teams that only practice twice a week). Every session is seventy-five minutes. The first session starts at 6pm and the second at 7.15pm. There is no interval between sessions. My schedule is: 2008 Boys Maroon Team (Monday and Wednesday at 6pm; 2007 Boys White Team (Tuesday and Thursday at 6pm); 2004 Boys White Team (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 7.15pm); Technical Training on Fridays.

I have the following stuff available to use in practices: two bags of ten 10 balls, one size 4's the other size 5's; forty cones with four different colors; ten pennies of one color and 5 of a different one; poles and coordination ladders; various pop-up goals of different sizes; regular goals of different sizes. The balls, cones and pennies are personal, whilst the SAQ stuff and goals I share with the other coaches.

1.1.3. Competition

A calendar year in the United States Soccer Federation is divided in various seasons, that changes according to the different states. In the state of South Carolina, the organization responsible for the youth soccer is the South Carolina Youth Soccer Association. The season's split is:

- Spring Season from January to May. The U14 and above age groups play High School season, while the U13 and below age groups play a regular club season;
- Summer Season from May to August. This is an interval between the Spring and Fall seasons, where only the elite players have practices and competitions. This time of the year is occupied with summer camps and activities;
- Fall Season from August to December. There is only club practices and competitions, across the U8 to U19 age groups;
- Winter Season from December to January. This is a break between the Fall and Spring seasons. It is the time to prepare the older players for the High School tryouts, while some of the teams compete in Futsal Leagues.

Each season has different competitive moments. Even the leagues and teams can be the same between the Spring and the Fall season, the competitions are independent. In the Spring season there is also high school competitions (leagues and tournaments). The Summer season consists only in tournaments. The tables below are showing the teams and competitions attended in every season.

Table 1. Fall 2016 season competitive schedule

Fall 2016 Season		
Team	League	Tournaments
GPS NASA 08 Boys Maroon	SCYSA U9 Boys Division 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carolina Cup, in Columbia; • James Island Cup, in Charleston.
GPS NASA 07 Boys White	SCYSA U10 Boys Division 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carolina Cup, in Columbia; • James Island Cup, in Charleston.

GPS NASA 04 Boys White	SCYSA U13 Boys Open League	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discoveries Tournament in Rock Hill; • James Island Cup, in Charleston.
------------------------	----------------------------	--

Table 1. Fall 2016 season competitive schedule

Table 2. Spring 2017 season competitive schedule

Spring 2017 Season		
Team	League	Tournaments
GPS NASA 08 Boys Maroon	SCYSA U9 Boys Division 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discoveries Tournament in Rock Hill; • James Island Cup, in Charleston.
GPS NASA 07 Boys White	SCYSA U10 Boys Division 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liverpool Lexington Tournament, in Lexington; • James Island Cup, in Charleston.
GPS NASA 04 Boys White	SCYSA U13 Boys Open League	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liverpool Lexington Tournament, in Lexington; • James Island Cup, in Charleston.

Table 3. Summer 2017 season competitive schedule

Summer 2017 Season	
Team	Tournaments
GPS Carolina Elite – Charleston 2009 Boys Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savannah Tournament, in Savannah, GA; • GPS Carolina Summer Showcase, in Charlotte, NC.
GPS Carolina Elite – Charleston 2001 Boys Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPS Carolina Summer Showcase, in Charlotte, NC. • XVI National Cup – Southeast Regional Tournament, in Winston-Salem, NC.

Table 4. Fall 2017 season competitive schedule

Fall 2017 Season		
Team	League	Tournaments
GPS NASA 09 Boys Maroon	SCYSA U9 Boys Division 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPS NASA Fall Kick Off, in Charleston; • James Island Cup, in Charleston.
GPS NASA 07 Boys White	SCYSA U11 Boys Division 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPS NASA Fall Kick Off, in Charleston; • James Island Cup, in Charleston.
GPS NASA 04 Boys White	SCYSA U14 Boys Open League	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPS NASA Fall Kick Off, in Charleston; • James Island Cup, in Charleston.

1.2. Objectives

My main intention when I accepted this purpose was to understand the reality of soccer game and training in a different country, particularly in a country where the soccer is not the main sport.

I knew it would be an excellent opportunity to develop the English language (speaking and understanding) in general, because it is the universal language, but especially the soccer specific terminology. This experience will definitely enrich my knowledge and future opportunities in other countries.

Working in a totally different environment from Portugal made me adapt my coaching style, without losing my identity, as I challenge to deal with children of a different culture and knowledge of the game. Their points of view are based on working in a philosophy based and directed to technical actions more than specific game principles. At the same time, I tried to introduce my own ideas of the game and game teaching.

Obtaining the UEFA B coaching level that is international recognized, allowing me to continue my coaching formation abroad.

Understanding the importance and dynamics of an office role related to coaching and sports management, an opportunity that I didn't have at my previous clubs. I was responsible for tasks such as tournament organization and registration, strategies of communication, especially with the parents, activities management and preparation and propagation of events.

1.3.SWOT Analysis

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths:

- Perception of feelings and emotions by the players;
- Global observation of what's happening in the session;
- Dynamic of sessions;
- Interaction with the players before, during and after the session;
- Communication and feelings transmission;
- Capacity to adapt to different situations.

Weakness:

- Clearly expression in English idiom (direct and totally clarify messages);
- Observation of the opponent team during the game;
- Greater use of interrogative feedback as questioning techniques.

Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities:

- Implement new ideas of training and a different from to teach the game;
- Make the players thinking the game, making decisions by himself;
- Introduce drills as related to the game as possible (playing forms and small-sided games);
- Develop extra-game tasks, especially communication with parents.

Threats:

- British ideas have a big strength in this environment;
- Lack of concentration by the players;
- Low perception of the game by the players.

1.3.1. Strategies to Implement

Understanding the environment and the culture in USA, knowing the dynamics of the kids and routines in the club, adapting myself to it and integrate me perfectly. Be part of the culture (country and club) is a very important point, in my opinion, to succeed.

It is also important to develop my speech and understand the language as soon as possible to make perfect communication with the athletes and avoid distractions/barriers with my accent or errors.

I plan to introduce my own ideas of the game and game teaching, incorporating them into the club philosophy. It is very necessary to recognize the knowledge of the game and game concepts by the players and after it teach my own ideas and definitions, adapting them to the old ones (in kinds of terms).

Getting involved in the office tasks, knowing the dynamics behind the game, understanding clearly my office role and trying to support in this “off-coaching” tasks as much as possible.

1.4. Structure of the document

This document is composed by seven chapters, in which are inserted the three areas of the internship. Area 1: Management of the training and competition process; Area 2: Innovation and investigation; Area 3: Relation with the community. It is a document mainly based on my job as a coach in a different country and culture, reporting personal experiences and thoughts, problems of my daily work and how did I get adapted to this new context.

The first chapter is the contextualization of the internship and club, with a brief description of the company's role in youth sports (specifically soccer), the structure of the competitions and seasons in the United States of America, and a SWOT analysis and objectives to implement that were done in the first weeks of the internship.

Secondly is the literature review, approaching all the themes that were discussed in this document, supporting the ideas in previous scientific investigations. It is briefly talked about the game, highlighting its moments, phases and principles. Then it is expressed about the development stages, the role as a coach, and the autoethnography and logbook methods.

The third chapter focuses on the intervention as a coach, with an excerpt of a logbook done during the season. It reports two moments of the season, with the personal feeling and thoughts about practices and games. The aim of this chapter is to provide to the reader the comprehension and involvement in my own ideas, interventions and behaviors as a coach. Also, a self-reflection about myself and my coaching behaviors.

Following this structure, it is the analysis of the planning done by myself to the three teams that I was coaching. Each team has a different age-group and game format, so the aim of this document is to propose an adjustment of the youth soccer plan, appropriating the matters and the game format of each age group, respecting the ability of the players and the developing and learning stages.

The fifth chapter is the description and balance of the event organized to the community, to provide a good learning moment, sharing experiences and thoughts with other experienced coaches. The target-market is the soccer coaches, particularly the soccer students of the university.

The last chapter, sixth, is the final conclusion of this internship report, emphasizing reflections and thoughts about the work done.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The game

Soccer is a simple game to play and to understand, with a framework of 17 rules, played in every direction, since that inside of bounds. The ball can be touched with any part of the body that is not the arms or hands (exception for the goalkeeper), being the physical contact with the opponent permitted (Ferreira & Queiroz, 1982). This game opposes two teams that are contesting the possession of the ball, with the objective of score more and concede less goals than the opposite team (Castelo, 2003).

This simplicity is composed by variables: physical, technical-tactical, psychological, sociological. It is fundamental to develop a correct process of analysis, rationalization and systematization of the game components, with the objective of responding to the constants referred. This is defined as the “reading of the game” (Ferreira & Queiroz, 1982). This quality must be developed since the early stages of training with young soccer players (Almeida, Ferreira & Volossovitch, 2013).

Due to the unpredictability that the game reveals, it can be considered as system (open, dynamic, complex and non-linear), because it has the following proprieties: it has components that are present in another systems; it has decision-making processes; there is a possibility to be modified; there is an objective and evaluation units for the success (Garganta & Gréhaigne, 1999).

It is essential to respect its globosity, to systematize the game, simplifying its complex structure in a way that its elementary phases are the main themes of training. These elementary phases reflected in the didactic will determine the path of formation, as well as the methodological fundamental stages, according to the complexity of the game (Ferreira & Queiroz, 1982). This will determine the game fundamental actions as the contents of the training process, and the fundamental or elementary forms as the starting point and way for the learning and betterment.

The technical and tactical content of the game develops in an antagonistic framework of two fundamental phases of the game: attack and defense. These can be individual (attacker vs defender) or collective (attacking team vs defending team). Each element of the game (attacker or defender) tries to break the balance and create numerical advantage over the opponent to achieve the success (Teodorescu, as cited in Castelo, 2003). According to the same author, it was necessary

to establish principles, rules, forms, and other elements to ensure the success, in offense and defense.

The phases of the offensive and defensive process are the steps taken in the development of the attack or defense, since its beginning until it is done (Queiroz, 1893; Castelo, 2003). The three phases of the offensive process are: building offensive situations, creating finishing situations and finishing. The three phases of the defensive process are: impede the building of the offensive situations, avoid finish situations and defend the goal.

The forms are the organizing structure of the activity during the game and in the different phases (Queiroz, 1983). Each form corresponds to a phase, being developed through the different technical-tactical actions (Ramos, 2002). The table below shows the correspondence between phases, forms and technical-tactical actions.

Table 5. Association between phases, forms and technical-tactical actions.

Phase/Form	Attack	Defense
Phase I	Finishing	Defend the goal
Form	Attack vs 0 + Gk	
	Characteristic technical-tactical actions	
	Shoots, dribbling, receiving and ball control	Defend the goal (goalkeeper)
Phase II	Create finishing situations	Avoid finishing situations
Form	Attack vs defense + Gk	
	Characteristic technical-tactical actions	
	Pass, dribbling, receiving and ball control, skills, runs, combinations, compensations, patters of play, set pieces, methods of play (supported attack and quick attack)	Marking, tackling, interceptions, compensations, patters of play (defensive), methods of play (individual defense, zone defense, mixed)
Phase III	Building the offensive situations	Impede building offensive situations

Form	Gk + attack vs defense + Gk	
	Characteristic technical-tactical actions	
	All actions of the phase II Methods of play (counter-attack) Systems of play	All actions of the phase II Systems of play

Table 5. Association between phases, forms and technical-tactical actions.

The game principles are the tactical rules that guide the players' activity. They constitute a way of guiding the players actions, allowing the player to intervene in the different situations of the game (Ramos, 2002). The game fundamental principles (that are the same in offense and defense): refuse numerical disadvantage, avoid numerical equality and create numerical advantage (Queiroz, 1983; Ramos, 2002). The game specific principles are described below.

Offensive:

1. Penetration: Create numerical and spatial advantage, attack the goal or the opponent;
2. Cover: Support the player on the ball, defensive balance;
3. Mobility: variability of the positions, occupy free space, create free space, create passing lanes, keep possession of the ball, break the opponent defensive structure;
4. Space: Collective offensive actions to give width and depth.

Defense:

1. Delay: Marking the player on the ball, stop the counter-attack, give time for the team organize themselves;
2. Cover: Support the player that is pressuring the ball;
3. Balance: cover the free space and players, block the closest passing lanes;
4. Concentration: Collective defensive actions to take from the opposing team width and depth away.

2.2. Development stages

Nowadays, the training model is looking for methods and forms that provide the appropriation of technical-tactical behaviors, supported in the development of the specific physical abilities, closer to the real game situations. The learning/training process analyzes two key variables: the nature of what is going to be taught, the game (of soccer), and the object to which is addressed, the player (Ferreira, 1983).

The process of youth preparation shouldn't be oriented to a permute specialization, expecting a planned and systematized preparation, in harmony with the athlete's development process. The first stages of learning are the preparation for the future, being the practices and competition the way of formation and not the way to obtain immediate high performances (Ferreira, 1983).

In the development pathway, it is fundamental to adapt the contents to the player's and team's ability and level of the game. The superficial acquisition of the techniques and a quicker transition from the different learning stages, atrophies the player's development (Ferreira, 1983). A planned teaching of the game, takes care about the child's development, adapting the programmatic contents, structuring the process in stages, accommodating the levels of complexity of the game to the player's level of ability.

Below is a summary of the stages of development and its principles.

1. Formation / Initiation (8/12 years old)

- Practice does not have the purpose to achieve immediate high performances;
- Respect for the development and growth stages of the athlete;
- Predominant use of a global methodology (game) and constant analysis of the behaviors;
- Development of the weakest side and improvement of the strongest;
- Coordinate the training programs, adapting the planning according to: the level of ability to achieve and necessities of the competition;
- Lower level of complexity and higher number of repetitions in technical-tactical drills;
- Correct technical execution, in a lower intensity if needed;

- Smaller groups and wide spaces.

2. Pre-specialization (13/14 years old)

- Practice does not have the purpose to achieve immediate high performances;
- Respect for the development and growth stages of the athlete;
- Predominant use of an intervention that appeals to the comprehension of the situations;
- Development of the weakest side and improvement of the strongest;
- Coordinate the training programs, adapting the planning according to: the level of ability to achieve and necessities of the competition;
- Higher level of complexity and repetitions in the technical-tactical drills;
- Technical-tactical actions combined (opposed and un-opposed);
- Smaller groups and progressive reduction of the space.

3. Specialization (15/16 years old)

- Practice does not have the purpose to achieve immediate high performances. Progressive introduction of the specific practice;
- Respect for the development and growth stages of the athlete;
- Predominant use of an intervention that appeals to the comprehension of the situations;
- Work on the weakest and strongest side equivalently;
- Adjustment of the training programs according to competition, level of ability to achieve and performances observed in competition;
- Higher level of complexity and repetitions in the technical-tactical drills;
- Increase of the execution speed of the technical-tactical drills;
- Accuracy executing the technical-tactical drills;
- Selection of the individual technical actions in offense and defense according to the player's position and role.

4. Betterment - 1st stage (17/18 years old)

- The technical-tactical preparation has the aim to achieve high performances in a mid-term, based in increasingly specific practices;
- Individual work on the strongest points, with higher performance requirements;
- Adjustment of the training programs according to competition, level of ability to achieve and performances observed in competition;
- Growth of the complexity and execution speed of the technical-tactical drills;
- Lower number of repetitions with higher execution intensity;
- Specific practice of the technical and tactical actions according to the player's role and position;
- Rise of the execution speed of the individual and collective actions in the real game situations.

5. Betterment - high performance (18 years old and above)

- The technical-tactical preparation has the aim to achieve high performances, based in increasingly specific practices;
- Maximize the work rate on the strongest points;
- Planning according to the team strategy, organization, characteristics and requirements of the competition;
- Highest levels of complexity with higher requirements of technical, tactical and physical nature;
- Specific practice of the technical and tactical actions according to the player's role and position, with a vast number of high intensity repetitions, aiming to achieve the maximal performance and efficiency.

2.3.The Coach

Effective coaches are those who demonstrate the ability to apply and align their coaching expertise to particular athletes and situations in order to maximize athlete-learning outcomes. A definition proposed by Côte & Gilbert (2009, pp.316) is that coaching effectiveness is “the

consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athlete's competence, confidence, connection and character in specific coaching contexts". The same authors affirmed "coaches who demonstrate coaching effectiveness over an extended period of time (i.e., "consistent application" in our definition) may then be considered expert coaches".

To be successful, coaches have to interact regularly with their athletes, assistant coaches, parents, and other professionals. It is important for coaches to continuously develop their interpersonal knowledge base so that can communicate appropriately and effectively with their particular athletes and other people. Coaching expertise is also about the ability to create and maintain relationships with others and the ability to learn from one's own practice. Interpersonal knowledge refers to the understanding of oneself and the ability for introspection and reflection. A coach's ability to maximize athletes' outcomes rests not only on extensive professional knowledge and interpersonal knowledge, but also on constant introspection, review, and revision of one's practice (Côte & Gilbert, 2009).

Coaching also involves providing the guidance that helps athletes become confident and self-reliant members of their sport and society, influencing on their characteristics such as self-esteem, satisfaction and perceived competence (Côte & Gilbert, 2009; Cruz et al., 2001). Through their interactions with athletes, coaches have unique opportunities to influence their athlete's psychological growth. Sports can be a tremendous vehicle for athletes to develop confidence, connection with others and character. Deci and Ryan (as cited in Côte & Gilbert, 2009, pp.313) "suggested that the development of highly motivated, self-determined and invested individuals requires an environment that provides opportunities to make autonomous decisions, develop competence, and feel connected to others".

"Athletes' outcomes and coaches' knowledge are characterized differently, at different stages of an athlete's development, with respect to context. According to different coaching context, coaches will require a different mix of professional, interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge to develop athlete's competence, confidence, connection and character" citing Côte & Gilbert (2009, pp.315). The image below represents the coaching objectives for developing athletes' outcomes in different contexts.

Table 6. Coaching objectives for developing athletes' outcomes in different contexts

<p>Participation Coach for Children</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt an inclusive focus on opposed to and exclusive selection policy based on performance; 2. Organize a mastery-oriented motivational climate; 3. Set up safe opportunities for athletes to have fun and engage playfully in low-organization games; 4. Teach and assess the development of fundamental movements by focusing on the child first; 5. Promote the social aspect of sport and sampling.
<p>Participation Coach for Adolescents and Adults</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide opportunities for athletes to interact socially; 2. Afford opportunities for athletes to have fun and playfully compete; 3. Promote the development of fitness and health-related physical activities; 4. Teach and assess sport-scientific skills in a safe environment for long-term sports involvement; 5. Teach personal and social assets through sport (citizenship).
<p>Performance Coach for Young Adolescents</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organize the sport experience to promote a focus on one sport; 2. Teach “rules of competition”; 3. Offer opportunities for fun with increasingly greater demands for deliberate practice; 4. Teach and assess physical, technical, perceptual, and mental skills in a safe environment; 5. Present positive growth opportunities through sport (i.e. civic engagement, responsibility).
<p>Performance for Older Adolescents and Adults</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set up training regime grounded in deliberate practice; 2. Allow athletes appropriate mental and physical rest;

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Prepare athletes for consistent high-level competitive performance;4. Teach and assess physical, technical, perceptual, and mental skills in a safe environment;5. Provide opportunities for athletes to prepare for “life after sport” |
|--|

Table 6. Coaching objectives for developing athletes' outcomes in different contexts

The coach is a sensible intermediate point between two types of units: the club or organization (that expect to see their expectations achieved) and the athletes (ensuring that their necessities are met and they are satisfied with their improvement). Cruz et al. (2001) referred four specific target behaviors to promote: value the effort and the good performance, encouraging after the mistake, corrective instructions and technical instructions. The coaches are encouraged to adapt the approach of ‘do your best and have fun’ instead of only focus on winning. The same authors mentioned four guiding principles to the coach's behaviors (adapted from Smith & Smoll, 1997; source Cruz et al., 2001).

- The idea of winning and success is defined by taking into consideration the maximum effort and personal improvement, with the main objective of having fun and joy of playing the game, without the fear of failing;
- Positive interactions coach-athlete, encouragement, positive feedback and technical instructions to improve the performance;
- Establish rules that promote the respect between teammates, team cohesion and bond;
- Involve the players in the team's decisions and rules, reinforcing the commitment with the team;
- Look to obtain feedback from the players about the coaching behaviors and encourage a self-evaluation and awareness of these behaviors.

2.4.Logbook

Reflection is defined as “the mental process of structuring or restructuring an experience, a problem or existing knowledge or insights” (Korthagen & Wubbels, as cited in Korthagen, 1999, pp.193). A logbook is a notebook in which the person records his or her own reflections on a particular lesson, meeting or event (Korthagen, 1999). It is used as an instrument to register reflexive experiences – personal and professional – over a certain period of time, that includes interpretations, opinions, feelings and thoughts, with the objective intention of talk to oneself (Alves, 2004). The same author defined the logbook as a way of expression, as well as an effective way of learning.

The logbook was used with the intention of recording personal experiences and thoughts, relationships with the team and players, communications and decision-making actions. Afterwards, make a self-evaluation about the intervention as a coach.

3. THE LOGBOOK OF A COACH WORKING ABROAD: A SELF-REFLECTION

3.1. Introduction

This chapter is the reflection of the intervention as a coach during two moments of my experience. The first moment is one week of practices followed by the Liverpool Lexington Tournament, in the beginning of the Spring 2017 season. The second moment is part of the Elite program with the participation on the XVI Nation Cup - Southeast Regional Tournament, in the Summer 2017 season.

It is an excerpt of a logbook done through the Spring and Summer 2017 seasons. The feelings and thoughts were recorded in video every night before I went to bed. Later on, they were transcribed to text, allowing me to make a self-reflection about my coaching behaviors. Due to the lack of time and availability, I couldn't register this self-reflection as often as I would like, being some reflections done mentally instead of registered. Although, when I had the change to accomplish the full process, it was helpful to rethink about some decisions in practices and/or games, like the management of the session, quality of the coaching intervention, frequency of feedbacks and players' performance and attitude.

While reading this paper, I would like the reader to get involved in my thoughts and feelings, as if he or she was living my own experience. Thereupon, I could share and pass my experiences to the reader, showing a little bit of myself as a coach.

3.2. Logbook

3.2.1. Spring 2017 Season

Monday, January 30th, 2017

Sessions: 2008 Boys Maroon and 2004 Boys White

The first session tonight was okay. The intensity wasn't as high as I was expecting, but it was important to work on this week's topic "winning the ball back". I focused my attention on the first defensive principle (delay/contain), giving a lot of feedbacks about the delay body shape. A side-side position, depending to which side the defender would like to show the attacker. Adding to that, the behavioral change after winning the ball back, looking for a target (the two gates in this

drill). At the same time, I was also giving some feedback to the attackers' quickness changing direction. However, this is something that we need to work on, particularly the quickness getting closer to the attacker, reducing his space.

The session started with some ball manipulation and a simple triangle passing drill, focusing the objective on the passing and receiving technical action (using the inside part of the foot). At the end, the session ended with a four teams tournament (each team with 2 players), stimulating some competitive/winning attitude. During this last drill, the intensity was higher.

The second session had a very good intensity. We have a tournament coming this weekend and the players were focused. The aggressiveness in the first drill (3x1 rondos) was excellent. This allowed a great development of the session, because the topic of this week is "defending/pressing". A simple passing drill to promote the passing and receiving technical actions was followed by some 1v1, 2v1 and 2v2 situations to a goal with a goalkeeper. My feedback was focused more on the defensive actions, making sure the delay body shape and defensive covers were being done correctly. But the offensive ones had some of the attention too, it is important to have a good and quick direction changing to beat an opponent.

We finished with a 1+3x3 game with three gates, working on the shuffling by the defenders depending where the ball is. Again, the focus was more on the defensive actions, making sure the three players were defending the right space. The quality on the defensive technical actions (delay, cover and balance) wasn't so good here, but merit to the attackers, that were moving continually.

I didn't appreciate one thing about this session: the players were needing my louder and frequently voice to raise the intensity of the exercise. It looks like sometimes they just work because I am demanding that. That is not right. Yes, it is my role to do that (if needed), but I would like the players to have that kind of behaviors by themselves. It is something to work on during this season.

Tuesday, January 31st, 2017

Sessions: 2007 Boys White and 2004 Boys White

The session with the 2007 White team was similar to the one of the 2008's yesterday. Only the last drill was different, where they played a 3v3 small-sided game. The weekly topics are the same for both teams, but in these first weeks of the season I am doing similar drills in order to compare the performance and acquisition concepts between both teams. The quality in the passing drill was higher, but the intensity in the 1v1 and 2v1 situations was similar. Again, my main attention was on the first defensive principle, the delay. Frequently feedbacks about the side-side body shape, guaranteeing they are understanding the importance of this defensive action to win the ball back. Connected to that, the behavioral changes after winning the ball back, looking for a target.

In the final scrimmage I introduced the lanes rule. Attacking they must have at least one player in each lane (right, center and left), defending, they should occupy one, or two lanes, depending where the ball is (side: two lanes; center: one lane). They took some time to understand the reason of that rules, but I stopped the session a couple of times to enforce the importance of it. At the time, I was doing some questioning making sure they were understanding the reasons, and not just doing them. The last seven minutes were rules free. I was only observing if they were still respecting these rules, but they didn't. In the next session I will give them more playing time with that rules, making them used to them.

I lost my head in the first five minutes of the second session. The 2004 boys were being rubbish in the warm-up drill, the same that we do in the game day. We were talking yesterday about the importance of doing a good week of practices before the tournament, if they would like to take something from it. Everyone agreed on winning this game. But, instead, their attitude was not corresponding to their needs and goals. Absolutely no way! If they want to win the tournament, that was not the right attitude.

After that, the concentration and attitude were much better. The intensity was higher during the whole session, but again, it looked like was only because of my louder voice. It should be their natural behaviors, not just because of me. We did two exercises, which focuses was on the defensive principles, particularly the coordination between the three midfielders. The quality in the defensive actions and aggressiveness were good. Although, they misunderstood the covering interpersonal distance and where they should be at, avoiding the ball to go through the gap between the two players. It is important to defend well the center axis, avoiding spaces between the

midfielders. The three defensive principles were present (delay, cover, balance) with more feedbacks directed to the cover and balance. Because I am by myself in the sessions, it is difficult to focus the attention in a lot of behaviors at the same time. So, in the offensive actions, I was giving more attention to the movement off the ball, ensuring that they were looking for or creating free room to receive the ball.

Overall, it was a good session, apart from the beginning. Maybe there was a lot of information in this session and some of the players didn't get it all. But it is important they start thinking about this, or at least hearing what the right behaviors are. Particularly by the center midfielders, that are key for pressing the opposition. The delay principle has not been acquired as the cover and balance by some players. I don't really understand why, but some of them struggle to do it well most of the times.

Wednesday, February 1st, 2017

Sessions: 2008 Boys Maroon and 2004 Boys White

I only had six players for the 2008 session tonight. I was thinking in finishing the session with a big sided scrimmage, but instead I did a conditioned game 3x3, no goalkeeper. That was the only change due to the reduced numbers showed up. After the ball manipulation warm-up, we did a passing channels drill in a competitive mode. It is a simple and funny exercise that works on the precision of passing and receiving. The players in the younger ages enjoy it a lot.

The focus was again on the defensive actions, delay and cover, based on 1v1, 2v1 and 2v2 situations, the same as Monday. However, instead of a square where they first needed to play the 1v1, I did a diamond, so the cover (in the 2v2's) could have a reference of right or left, depending where the attacker was trying to go. The intensity today was higher and the defender were being more successful, due to the side-side body shape and tackling timing. Although my focus was the defensive part, the decision making in the offensive actions was being poor. I needed to intervene a couple of times to explain the indicators of when to dribble or to pass. The transition to the final 3x3 was good and the session ended with a very good intensity, with a couple of good goals scored.

In the transition between sessions I was trying to set up quickly the warm-up drill, but I got caught by some 2008 parents with questions. It took me five minutes to solve an issue that broke my routine. I had to tell the players to start some passing in groups of three while I was quickly finishing to set up the 4x2 rondos. I did pairs of 2 in each group in a competitive system. The groups with less ball's recovers in three minutes have a punishment in the end of the drill. I was stimulating the defensive aggressiveness. Following that, we did a passing drill, looking for a lot of touches on the ball and precision on the passes.

To work on the defensive principles (delay, cover and balance) I did two fields, where each team was defending three gates (a right, left and center). Each field had a neutral that allowed the attacking team to create numerical advantage. I tried to focus my feedbacks mainly in the defensive process, particularly in body shape of the defender on the pressure and the distance of the cover, trying to give them references of where it should be. Although, I feel it is difficult for them to understand that, because I don't think they have heard that terms (delay, cover, balance, interpersonal distances) a lot of times. I am here to help them understanding that!

In the final drill, attack vs defense I focus my feedbacks on the midfielders and defensive diagonal when the ball was on the side lanes. Also, the maximal width needed by the wingers, so we could have more space to play. The intensity and the behaviors were good, but the technical actions were being poor, which didn't allow us to have a better flow in the game/session. At the end, I had a chat with the team about the expectations for the tournament, where they said they want to win, and what is the attitude/mindset needed if they really want that.

Thursday, February 2nd, 2017

Session: 2007 Boys White

Very good session tonight. I am enjoying a lot this group because they have desire to learn. I can see the willingness in their faces every session. Even though, they are aware that they are not top-level players, or their technical actions are poor, they try harder and want to reach a better level. That is a key point for me. I will do my best to help them achieve their objective.

The first part of the session (ball manipulation and rondo) was good, but the intensity raised a lot in the 1v1, 2v1 and 2v2 situations. The defensive actions, particularly the side-side body shape was being excellent and I could give a little bit more attention to the offensive ones, even the topic of the session was the defensive principles. Similar to the 2008 session, I did the diamond to the first 1v1, so then the second defender could have a reference for the cover. It worked pretty good once more.

The final drill, a 1+2x2 conditioned game split in three lanes, I let them play for thirty minutes, where the first fifteen had the lanes rule (3 attacking, 2 or 1 defending). I think today they comprehended better why the three lanes while attacking, because they had numerical advantage due to the neutral, so they could take advantage of it. I kept focusing my feedbacks in the defensive actions, with special attention to the correct defensive cover. Like the 2004 team, at the end I had a chat with the players about expectations for the tournament, but I took the pressure away from them, avoiding some players to stress out even before the first game. I want them to feel free!

Lexington Tournament, February 4th and 5th, 2017

Saturday

It is 5.30am. We are ready to leave. Lexington is our destination and the expectations are high. Added pressure to compete and play well in the tournament raises my focus for the pre-game preparation. The hour and forty-five-minute journey gives me time to review my notes. Starting teams and pre-game speeches are ready. I just need to think of a couple of different options in case I need to change anything last minute.

My first game is with the 2004 team. Happily, everybody arrived on time. There will be plenty of time to have a good conversation with the team before the warm-up. Their expectations need to be on the same level as mine. Win the tournament! “What are your expectations for this tournament?”, I asked. “Win”, they said. “But just sitting there and saying “win” will not give us the victories. If we really want to do this, we need to step on this field and prove it! Trophies are won giving the best on and off the field. It is not only talking! I reinforced. Everybody is looking focus and concentrated on the objective. Just a couple more instructions about how I want them to defend without the ball. “Defensive cover and balance is going to be crucial. An efficiency

positioning will give us advantage to defend the center-zone and avoid getting ourselves in trouble. As we worked on during last week, when the ball is on the side zone we defend diagonal, being easier to win any ball that they will try to play in the back of our defense. With this, we can always guarantee a cover to the player on the pressure.”. The warm-up has been excellent. I can see the willingness to win on their faces. Let’s do this!

1st Half

Great first-half! 3-0 up at half time. We took advantage of the way that the opponent tried to defend, pushing high with their defensive line, leaving a big gap between them and the goalkeeper. Our center midfielders and wingers understood this, making some runs between the center backs and full backs to create trouble for the opposing team.

This is the attitude of a team that really wants to win this tournament. “We can’t lose the concentration now. As we scored three goals during the first 35 minutes, they can score three goals in the second-half! We can’t let-up.” The game is controlled and the opponent didn’t create any big opportunity. I will make some changes to give more minutes to the non-starting players.

2nd Half

Game finished 3-2. I know I’m guilty for this. I think I wasn’t assertive as I should have been. I couldn’t pass the message in the way that I wanted. We didn’t take the second-half seriously. We were lucky we didn’t tie this game. “We almost ruin a great performance during the first-half. We were lucky, we can trust in this luck again! I hope that you have learned this lesson.”. Because I did it!

I’m running to my next game, with the 2007 team. Previously, I asked another GPS coach to warm-up the team, because I will arrive just in time for kick-off. The players are already on the field ready to start the game when I arrive. I didn’t have time to talk with them, but the coach said they were focused and they had a good warm-up.

1st half

Excellent performance, 3-0 at half-time. The defensive actions are being great (delay and defensive cover, particularly by both defenders). This didn’t allow the opponent to create chances. We scored majority of the opportunities created, making the game easier for us. “We need to keep

this attitude. This game is not over! On my previous game that just finished, we were winning at half time 3-0, final score was 3-2. We can't let something similar happen here. Do you want to win the tournament? ". "Yes, we do!", they answered with a big smile. "Don't get yourself in trouble. Play with your head up so you can see all the options to play. Find the easier one. Let's continue our great performance!".

2nd half

Game finished 6-2. We were slower during the second-half, but we dominated the game and the opponent didn't create many opportunities. Great start for these boys. If we continue with this focus and attitude, I'm sure we will win the tournament.

While I'm eating my lunch, I'm thinking what approach I should provide for the next game, with the 2004 team. The first-half was great, but the second was terrible. Should I have been more aggressive and focused the break from one half to the other? Or should I have been focus the great first-half and "ignore" the second, advising them that something similar can't happen again? I will have the aggressive one. Concentration and focus are vital for this game. It is probably the hardest game of the group stage.

"A team that wants to win a tournament can't lose the focus and do such different performances between the first and the second-half. We weren't good enough during the second-half. Is this clear for everybody here? This is the game that will tell if can make the final or not. Don't lose this opportunity!"

Warm-up has been poor. Focus is not even close to where it needs to be. So many passes and first touches missed. I'm feeling a bad game. I stopped the warm-up. "Bring it in, quickly! Are you being serious? What is this warm-up? Are you afraid to play, or do you just not want to do it?". No one answers. I can see in their face a mixture of different feelings. Fear and distraction. "You have more quality than this! It's on your side now. Show me, and more importantly, show yourselves what you want from this tournament! We can't lose this game.". I didn't even talk about any tactical points for the game. It's pointless with this lack of concentration.

1st half

1-0 down at half-time. An awful performance. We are being completely dominated. Quality connecting our passes is poor. We can't reach the last third. I don't think we had more than two shots, and none on target. "Is this the attitude of a team that wants to compete for the tournament? Are you sure that you really want to win this game? The opponent wants to win this game much more than you do! This is not good enough!".

I am having difficulties understanding what I am missing. Should I be so aggressive? Trust more in the players and give them confidence? I must find a solution, and quickly. I gave them two minutes of self-reflection while the players were drinking water and resting. I decided that I will give them confidence and explain clearly how important it is to be successful. "When we work hard to reach an objective, and we achieve it, the feeling is something great. When we do it playing the sport that we love, the feeling is amazing. You have more than quality to turn this game, to step on the field and do the things that we've been practicing. Passing the ball with quality, so we can connect our passes and reach out the last third with more quality and more often. After a pass we should have movement! So you can be ready to give a new passing lane. It's crucial the maximal width by the wingers so we can stretch the opposite back four and create spaces in the center axis, that can be explored by the striker or center midfielders, or get more space for the wingers, so they can look for 1v1 situations. Delay and defensive cover when we are on defense allowing us to recover the ball in the best moment. Be objective in the last third. Start the game with the right mindset!".

2nd half

Game finishes 1-1. Reaction in the second-half was good. The opponent gave a good reply and created some difficulties, but we found a way to beat them. Exactly what we talked about at half-time. Maximal width by the wingers creating space in the center axis. When they started to defend tighter, we had a lot of 1v1 situations in the side zones that we took advantage of. "It's not the best result, but we didn't lose and we are still in this race to the final. Tomorrow we need to have the right mentality and have desire otherwise, we won't be able to win this tournament. Go to the hotel. Rest. Have a good sleep and eat healthy!".

I have some time now until the last game of the day. I will think about the past three games. The 2007 played well and I just need to make sure the concentration for the game is right so that they will not let-up and ensure their presence in the final. The 2004 team did excellent the first 35

minutes of the tournament. Then they switched off and only got back into it again in the last 25 minutes of the previous game. They have two options: work hard and be focus, or not be concentrated and perform sloppy. The right words at the right moment can make all the difference. I know that and it is my task to find these moments.

2007 game

The final score was 7-1. Managing the game was pretty smooth and all the players performed well. I'm tired from the day and by the way the game occurred helped me a lot. I didn't need to intervene much during the game. Everyone was focused and determined on each task on the field. Finishing (in front of goal) has been excellent, but I would highlight again, the defensive actions as the best part of our performance. We didn't allow the opponents to create chances because we defend well the 1v1 situations and when they beat us there, the defensive cover was always in the right position to win the second ball. Aggressiveness to win the ball back was outstanding as well.

It's time to go to the hotel and lay down a bit. It was a long day. Tomorrow can be a great day and I want to be ready for it. I need to have the right words to pass on to the players to give them the confidence I'm feeling. I trust in them and in their abilities.

Sunday

I woke up with a good feeling of anxiety, the one that makes you be more focused and concentrated. The orange juice at the hotel was amazing and gave me the perfect feeling. The first game is with the 2004 team and I will pump them up. I will pass onto them confidence in a way they can believe in their capabilities and qualities to reach out the final.

It's 7am and I'm already at the fields. It's freezing but I want to make sure that everything is ready for the warm-up and pre-game speech. While the players are arriving, I set up the warm-up. I'm clarifying to myself the message that I want to transmit to the team. It's going to be vital that they get it in the perfect way. Confidence is the key to be successful.

"There is only one result for this game. Win and go to the final. I'm being as honest as I can with you. Although, I'm sure that you have enough quality and ability to do it. If you play in

the same way you did yesterday during the first-half, you will make it for sure! We need the center mids (midfielders) to be more aggressive pressuring the central axis, so we don't allow the opposing team time and space to think on that zone". Again, I reinforced the importance of the maximal width by the wingers, to stretch out the opposite back four. "Delay, defensive covers and balance as well as you did yesterday. You can do this. Together, as a team, as a unit, we can do this!"

1st half

Great start of the game! High intensity, quick reactions and aggressiveness. 2-0 up, 15 minutes into the game. Excellent management after that. They (the opponent) reach the last third once and couldn't get a shot. "Remember about yesterday! The game is not over. We have to continue working in the same way, with the same intensity and desire!". When this team is focused, it's easier to manage them, and their expectations. Half time speech was simple. They know what to do and I trust in them!

2nd half

2-1 final score. We managed the game well and we only conceded in the last 5 minutes of the second-half. We could have avoided this, but the most important thing is that we achieved our objective. We are in the final! "Congratulations! Your performance, attitude and mindset were excellent! First objective it is done (reach the final). Let's work to achieve the second! (win the tournament). Rest until the next game. Make sure you drink a lot of water. Yes, Gatorades as well if you want to. Eat healthy!"

I'm buzzing! What a performance from the team. It is a big pleasure to coach them when they perform like they did. It's time to run to the next game. The 2007 team are playing their last group stage game. The players should be starting the warm-up now, organized by another GPS coach.

I arrived just on time to finish the warm-up and talk with the team. They look happy, relaxed and focused. "We are so close to achieving our first objective: reaching the final! If we play in the same way that we did yesterday, I have no doubts that we are going to make it! Attitude, concentration and intensity were great. Let's do the same again today! Be clinical finishing off plays. Be smart defending our goal. Have fun and enjoy the game!"

1st half

2-1 up at half time. We started well, connecting our passes and looking to exploit the 1v1 situations on the side lanes. In a moment of distraction, we switch off in a defensive transition and we conceded a goal. We had opportunities to score more goals, but we lacked in confidence. “We are playing well, but this is not enough to win the game. We must play better during the second-half! Don’t lose concentration during the defensive moments, this can cost us more goals. Be objective in the last third! You have the quality to do it!”.

2nd half

Final score is 4-1. Defensively we were perfect during this second-half. Delay and defensive cover were always great. I think the opponent had only one shot during the second-half. “Congratulations for qualifying to the final! We deserve it. Excellent performance. Now get some rest, drink a lot of water and eat healthy! I will have a final with my 2004 team, so I might arrive just in time to run the warm-up, or during it.”.

The first objective is done: qualify both teams to the final. I love the pressure of playing I in a final. The feeling that you can achieve anything and at the end, celebrate – it is awesome. I want the players to use the pressure of playing in a final to help them focus in a positive way. Provide to the players that feelings and the opportunity to be attentional focus, in a positive way. I am more confident for the finals. I still have one hour before the first final with the 2004 team, to rethink my approach and pick my starting eleven. The 2007 team final is straight after, so I want to make sure that I have that game plan ready. Take the pressure away from the players, make them understand that we don’t play finals, we win them, and tell them that the most important thing is to give their best in every single moment. Independently the score, in the end we couldn’t say “I should have done better” or “I didn’t give my best”.

The players are back. Shin guards on, everyone making the last bits ready so I can start the pre-game speech. I’m talking with them to understand if there is any injury or someone that is not feeling good. Everything is set. “The big moment has arrived. This is what we were expecting since the beginning of the tournament. The final. It’s normal that you are feeling some anxiety and pressure, but this will make you work harder. It’s beautiful to play these games, to compete for something. A legend once said, we don’t play finals, we win them. This is the mindset that we

need. We want to win this game more than the opposition. We need to work harder than them during the whole game. Give your best every single minute. Bring all of qualities to the game! There is no new information to tell you about this game. You know what you need to do. Defensively and offensively! Does anyone have any questions?”. No one replies. I just gave a last-minute reminder about the main things: defensive diagonal, with delay, cover and balance working well. Width by the wingers, quick pressure and aggressiveness by the center mids, didn’t given space to the opposition on the center axis. The team had a great warm-up. They are focused and determined. I hope than can bring this to the field.

1st half

1-1 is the score at half-time. We scored thirty second before the half time whistle. It was our first shot on target and only our second shot during the whole of the first-half. I felt these goals as a hope to win this game. “We have to calm down! We can’t let the pressure affect us in this way. You are panicking on the field. Players hiding to not receive the ball. Terrible passing quality. We can’t connect our passes and reach the last third. Decision making has been poor. This is not attitude of players that want to win the final. The opposition want it more than you. If we play in the same way, we are not going to win this game. Where was the width by the wingers? Where was the quick and aggressive pressure on the center axis? We must do better. Don’t tell me that this was your best! You have more than quality to win this! Come on boys, we can do this!”

2nd half

Game finished 2-1. We won! The players are buzzing, celebrating together as a team and with their parents. We completely dominated the second-half. What a great attitude. Excellent intensity with and without the ball. I believe the opponent only had one shot during the second-half. Two completely different performances. They were determined and competed for this objective more than ever. Now they can say they did their best. I’m proud of what we achieved however, it’s time to run to the 2007 team final. If I win this game as well, I will have to celebrate both wins.

I arrive to the field and the players are already warming up. Some of them look focused and motivated. The others nervous and anxious. I realize this because of their passing quality. Weak and missing them. They are only doing passing lines, nothing complex to miss that many

passes. I must talk with them before the warm-up can continue. “Bring it in, quickly. I’m seeing a lot of you missing these 7 yards pass when you are not supposed to. There is no defender to pressure you. I know and I understand you might be feeling nervous, but you can’t let it affect you to not perform at your best. If there is anything that in the end you can say it is that you gave your best. You tried as hard as you could. Go back to the warm-up and relax. Just give your best and try to do the things in the best way that you can.” The rest of the warm-up was considerably better. The players are more confident now. Just a quick reminder about the importance of the defensive actions and we are ready to play this game.

1st half

3-1 at half time. What a great performance. We scored early and this made our task much easier, but the players must take the credit. They worked hard to win every single challenge. And they almost did it. “Great first-half! Well done. Although, this is not over. We still have 25 more minutes to play. We must play the second-half in the same way, otherwise we are not going to win this!”. Everybody nods affirmatively. They know that I’m right and they want to be the ones smiling at the end of the game.

2nd half

Game finished 5-2. Good second-half where we managed the goal advantage and the game in the best way. Movement of the ball, not allowing the opposition to get the ball. Then movement off the ball allowing us to receive the ball in space and time. We could have scored more goals. Defensively we gave a solid performance, delay and defensive cover worked well again. The opposing team score in the second-half with thirty second to go in the game. The players are very happy and I am very proud of them. I am proud of both teams.

I have a feeling of amazing joy. I have been able to provide the players of both teams, the opportunity to compete for a trophy and win - an unbelievable feeling. I can go home with the feeling of “mission accomplished”, but more important than that, I am a better coach now than before the tournament. Not because I won two trophies, but because I needed to find the right words to tell in the right moments. In some of the games and performances, we changed without even talking about anything tactical. I am connecting with these players and for me, this is excellent. Originally, I never thought that it was going to be as hard to clearly express myself in

key moments. However, sometimes the literal translation from Portuguese to English does not often have the same effect.

3.2.2. Summer 2017 Season

Monday, June 20th, 2017

Sessions: GPS Elite Charleston - 2009 Boys and 2001 Boys

The 2009 boys were delighted tonight. They performed amazing at the weekend, so I have done a more enjoyable practice. Taking advantage of the competitive mindset that they had at the weekend, the practice tonight was based in competitive moments, with 1x1 and 2x2 tournaments.

The session started with some passing channels, to promote the continuity of acquiring the correct technique executing the passing and receiving technical actions, with both feet. I have done the channels narrow demanding accuracy in the actions. Following that, multiple simultaneous 1x1 with 4 mini-goals as targets, stimulating the creativity, direction changing, skills, defensive aggressiveness and delay body shape.

Continuing the practice of 1x1 situations, an “up and down tournament” being the scoring method dribbling through a line, forcing the attackers to beat the opponent, while the defenders execute the correct delay technique (side-side body shape). The drill progressed to 2x2 games, with a four teams tournament. The session ran well and the players’ effort and satisfaction were excellent. As a reward, I let them take same penalties in the end of the session.

The second session, with the 2001 boys, had a very good intensity. There is a very important tournament this weekend, and the players’ mindset is the best. We want to win it, but we need to practice at the higher level if we want to achieve that objective. Following a SAQ exercise, a passing drill was done, being demanded accuracy and execution speed in the technical actions. The players achieved the execution speed demanded, but the accuracy wasn’t as higher as expected, which made me intervene in the session. I have explained them the importance of being rigorous in every technical action, thus when they would be in a decisive moment, they won’t miss the pass to the teammate, or the touch to control the ball.

A pattern of play with finishing as the objective was executed promoting some movements and routines in the team. The movements were being executed well, but the finishing wasn’t good.

Without opposition it wasn't acceptable the amount of opportunities missed. Marc and I intervened again, reinforcing the importance of scoring these situations, connecting with my previous feedback about being rigorous executing the technical actions. The exercise progressed to an attack vs defense + goalkeeper, working more specifically in the offensive and defensive organizations. I focused on the defense side, while Marc on the attacking one. There was a positive transfer from the movements done in the pattern of play to the game situation. I spent some time talking with the midfielders about the best way to shuffle when the opposing team moved the ball from one side lane to the other.

The session finished with a brief conversation about the expectations for the weekend and the effort need in the next practice and the weekend to achieve the objective.

Wednesday, June 22th, 2017

Sessions: GPS Elite Charleston - 2009 Boys and 2001 Boys

Continuing the content practiced of the last day, the session with the 2009 boys progressed to higher numerical relations in the drills. Based on the work about the game specific principles, with penetration and mobility, delay and defensive cover as the focus. The session started with a technical drill directed to practice dribbling and turning, evolving to 1x1 and 2x2 situations. The offensive actions were being better than the defensive ones, missing the delay body shape a lot of times. I stopped two times to clarify and strengthen the importance a good body shape to execute the tackling on the right timing.

An overload continuous exercise followed the warm-up, with multiple 1x1, 2x1, 3x2 situations with 2 goals and goalkeepers. This allowed to work on the various principles at the same time and it was done with a good intensity. The session finished with a 3x3 plus goalkeepers scrimmage. It was a more relaxed practice due to the great effort of the players in the last practice and weekend.

The 2001 boys session didn't start in the best way. Players' were switched off and giving no effort to the session. We intervened straight way, it could happen in the last session before the tournament. The message reached the destination and the effort in the rest of session was much

better. The theme was working on some progressive possession and switching the play, trying to outnumber the opposing team in the opposite lanes, switching the play quickly. Sometimes the execution speed wasn't being high and this allowed the defensive team to shuffle and avoid the numerical disadvantage the opposite side. The players were lacking on the body shape in the moment they received the ball, with a lot of negative touches and wrong orientation of the body. The feedbacks were oriented to these details to promote a quicker movement of the ball.

A three teams tournament in a small-sided space, with two goals and goalkeepers promoting a lot of finishing situations concluded the session. The intensity was heightened in this drill, achieving the objectives expected: a lot of finishing situations, movement off the ball and defensive aggressiveness, reducing the time on the ball.

A team talk recapping some of the team's behaviors and principles, as well as a reinforce on the objective for the weekend was done at the end. We are all with the same motivation and desire to win!

XVI National Cup – Southeast Reginal Tournament

It is dinner time and we are at the hotel having a staff meal. Everybody is excited about the tournament that which begins tomorrow. I am not an exception. The coaching staff are discussing the last minute details about their preparation for the next day tournament games. It is crucial to start with a win when you are playing in a group stage where you only play three games. I am sit next to Marc, talking about my approach to the game. "We don't really have any idea of what to expect about the opposing teams. We don't know them, or their style of play. Anyway, we are sure we will approach the game to win!" He said to me. "We know that we have a mature team, so we should put some pressure on them and explain the importance of starting well. I believe that the 4-3-3 system will give us more advantage, because we can have wider players exploring 1v1 situations on the side zones." I replied with a question "Inverted wingers (righties playing on the left-hand side, and vice-versa)?", "This would give us more advantage looking for inner movements, where we can find space in the center axis and possibilities to shoot." He said. A couple more adjusts about starting players and we were ready! I will have issues falling to sleep. My nerves are immense!

Day 1

I woke up super early and I am going with Sean to help him with his warm-up. I want to analyze the field where we are playing and get used to the facilities. For me, all these small details are vital. What are the field dimensions? What are the grass conditions? Any puddles on the field? Where can we warm-up? Which field side is better for the warm-up? Anything relevant on the field that we should take care with? Simple questions/answers that will make us be more prepared for the game.

After a long day watching games and helping the other coaches on the fields, it is almost our time. I really start understanding the level of commitment of these players when 5 to 10 minutes before the arrival time, we have all the squad there. Instantly I start interpreting their body language, trying to understand how they are feeling. The majority look calm and relaxed, confidence is a collective feeling. One or two players looking more nervous and anxious, but it's normal. They are down to start as substitutes. Only a couple of questions about the opposition, and more questions about our team: how we are going to approach the game and play. That's an excellent indicator. Their focus is internal and not external. I told them a couple of weeks ago "We can only control the inner factors. The outer ones we can't. So first, let's focus on ourselves and improve what we can manage."

The intensity of the warm-up was good. Excellent quality in the technical actions and the right behaviors during the attack vs defense drill. I focused my attention and feedbacks on the defensive line, coordinating with the movements/actions from the midfielders. Important to defend in a diagonal when the ball is on the side lanes, so we can protect ourselves if the opposition tries a diagonal switching of the field. With that diagonal we can always guarantee a cover to the player in-front of us. Also, if we need cover to the midfielder in-front, we can quickly do it. Important not give them space between the lines, creating imbalances in our structure. Marc was focused more on the offensive phase, particularly the movements off the ball from the midfielders, finding the gap between center-back and full-back (like we practiced in the last session). The wingers looking for 1v1 situations, that is one of our strengths, would be vital to creating issues for the oppositions defense. "Excellent warm-up, attitude and mindset are looking good, as well as intensity. Let's take it to the game. We know our responsibilities and objective for this tournament. We have been talking about it during the last two/three weeks. We must start strong, showing the

opponent that we are here to dominate and to win. We have the quality to do it!” Marc said. “Now it is the moment that we were waiting for. Time to prove to ourselves that we have the quality, that we want to do it and that we can do it. Enjoy the game. Give your best!” I added just to conclude. The team is motivated and confident for the game.

1st Half interruption

20 minutes in, the referee stops the game. Lightning is only 10 miles away, so the rules say that we must stop and wait 30 minutes without lightning before the game restarts. We are 1-0 up, playing well, moving the ball around and exploring the 1v1 situations on the side lanes. We will try to keep the players together and talk about some specific situations. It is important to not lose the focus on this game.

It started raining and the waiting was felt like forever. Almost one hour after the game was stopped, we are back on the field. The referee will give us an extra 15 minutes to warm-up before the game restarts. Quick and simple exercises, it is important to activate the players, physically and physiologically, trying to return to the same intensity and tempo before we stopped.

1st Half, last 20 minutes

We couldn't get back to the same intensity of the first period. The opposition started stronger, defending better the side lanes. We weren't so successful trying to find the inner movements and spaces. Also, in the defensive process we were conceding a big gap between the defensive and midfielders line, that the opposition was exploring with players between lines. But we are still leading, in the second-half we must be careful with that. That was the message passed to the players, in a relaxed but assertive way.

2nd Half

Game finishes 2-0. Great start. We never reach the same quality of the first period, merit to the opposition who defended better to our strengths (side lanes and inner movements). But we also improved in the way that we were defending, so they couldn't find the gap in-between lines, where they were being successful. “It was a good start, we reached the objective. Very good first twenty minutes, but after that break we couldn't bring out the same quality. I can understand that the break was difficult to deal with, because it was long, but we can't let ourselves down like that!

It can't be an excuse. We need to be prepared and strong dealing with these external factors. How? Fixing the inner problems first, focusing on what we need to improve or change." I said. "It was just the first game. We have achieved nothing yet! So, this will not change anything in our mentality or the way to approach the next game. Humility! So tomorrow we want to be better than today! That's the thought we always need. Good effort. Go to the hotel, rest, eat healthy and sleep well! Everybody feeling okay?" They all nod. "Perfect! See you tomorrow."

After dinner, I met Marc to talk about the game trying to understand the drop in the performance after the break. "We were taking advantage of the wider spaces, with a lot of 1v1 situations on the side lanes. Because our players are strong in these situations we were creating some finishing situations, particularly by crosses. After the break, they were bringing an extra player to cover the full-backs on the side lanes, creating 1v2 situations that made them win the ball back more times." Marc said. "They were also defending more compact, reducing the space in-between lines, particularly in the center axis, where we started looking for space." He added. As I replied "That is truth. They defended in a low block, allowing us to be comfortable on the offensive half. They only create a great chance to score, in a transition, apart from that, they had issues reaching their last third, merit to our team, that we reacted quickly when we lose possession of the ball. Maybe against a team like this, we want to attract them to a higher zone of the field, creating space behind their back four, that we can explore with runs by the center midfielders. If we don't have inside space to play, we have to take them from that positioning anyway". "It is something to better think about tomorrow, it could be a solution. But if we are leading the game, maybe we don't need to take a higher risk." He concluded.

Now it's time to sleep. Tomorrow we are back at it again. I will think by myself about what really happen in that game and what we can change to penetrate their structure.

Day 2

While I am having breakfast, I am thinking about yesterday's game and what we can improve on today. It is vital to win today so we can be almost qualified to the semi-finals. I wrote a few notes on my notepad to pass to the team before the game. I made a coffee to go and we are on our way to the fields.

All the players arrived on time, they are getting ready while I am setting up the warm-up. They look more focus than yesterday and not as nervous as they were. They are mature and they understand the importance of being switched on the whole time. During the warm-up I have individual chats with some players, just to clarify positioning or behaviors needed, depending on their position.

The intensity during the warm-up was excellent. I hope we can take that intensity to the game, it would be great. Marc starts talking with the team, a few moments before the match kicks-off. “We know are our responsibilities and we are taking them, as we can realize in our warm-up. Please take the same intensity and concentration to the game. We want to start this game strong and dominate it since the beginning, so we need more movement off the ball, to guarantee that we always have passing lanes available to keep possession of the ball”. After him, I had just a quick point”. The main thing that we need to improve is quickness executing the movements with and without the ball while avoiding being predictable. If we are on the side lane in a 1v1 situation, we should be quicker executing the technical actions to beat the opponent. If we want to look for inner game, the movements in the center axis must be quicker, otherwise the opposition will reduce our time and space there. Also, it is important to react quickly when we lose possession of the ball. Yesterday we did it well. Have a good game, enjoy it!”.

1st half

We are still 0-0 at half-time. The quality in the last third has been poor and we can’t create finishing opportunities. “We are reaching the last third, but then we are stuck! Our actions are slow and we don’t have movement to receive the ball or look for a space to explore. If we stand still, it’s easy for the opposition to defend us. If we can’t penetrate their structure in the last third, why don’t we just try a long-range shot? We must find different solutions in the last third otherwise we are being too predictable to defend.” I said, showing a bit of my anger. “The quality in the building zone is being great, movements off the ball from the center midfielders and wingers are excellent, but then when we reach that last third it looks like we lose our ideas. Do you remember what we talked about before the game? Be explosive in 1v1 situations. Be objective close to the opposite goal!”. We made a couple of changes in the team that will start the second-half. We are not starting the strongest team, let’s see how they will react in the first few minutes.

2nd half

Game finishes 3-1. Excellent reaction in the second-half. They got the message at half-time. First goal scored was by a long-range shot. Second goal by a throw-in to the penalty box. Different solutions to achieve the same objective: score a goal! The dynamic with and without the ball was much better, as well as the objectiveness in the last third. As a coach, these are the moments that make me feel overjoyed! When your message is simple and clear and when your players understand 100% what you are saying. Quick speech, touching the main points, being objective. Particularly for me, I am talking to them in a language that is not my main language. I feel great. Objective achieved. We are already qualified for the semi-finals.

Just before dinner, I am sat with Marc doing a recap about the game. “I think the quality in the first offensive phase and in the building phase was great. The interchange positions were being executed in the right moments, allowing us to progress on the field, keeping possession of the ball. Our problem was when we reached the last third, that we were lacking movement off the ball, being slow executing the actions” I said. As he answers “I agree, but also the fact that we were playing with inverted wingers (a right footed player on the left and a left footed player on the right), reduced the width and the space on the side lanes looking for 1v1 situations. We had moments where our front three players were in the center axis, and we couldn’t reach the outside space.” “The full-backs have a main role in that too! They should be higher on the field being that wider option, if the winger is inside” I replied, adding “Maybe tomorrow we will try a midfield diamond, having more players on the center axis, making our full-backs be higher on the field being the wider options”. It is just an idea to think during a good night of sleep.

Day 3

I woke up early and I’m already at the fields. The team that we are playing in the afternoon in the semi-finals is playing now, so I came early to watch their game. During their warm-up, I realized a main characteristic of that team: all the crosses are directed to the far post. It is important to be aware of these situations. They play in a 1-4-3-3 system, similar to us. They have the processes in the first offensive phase clearly defined, with the holding midfielder dropping between the center backs, creating a line of 3 players, allowing their full backs to be high on the field. When they reach the building zone, they are dynamic, interchanging positions a lot of times, creating issues to the opposition defend. In the last third, the objective is clear, look for a cross to

the far post. I wrote all these notes in my notepad, so I can pass them briefly to the team before the game.

“How do you think that we should approach this game? Telling the team that we are already qualified, or as if we still need to win to go through?” I ask Marc. “Well, the parents and the players already know that they are qualified. So, we should approach it in that way, giving more playing time to the non-starting players, trying a different system and rotation positions”. He replied. Warm-up was good again, we only talked with the team after it, avoiding lack of concentration during the warm-up. “We are already qualified, but we still want to play in a high tempo and intensity, so we can take it to the afternoon’s game”. That was the main idea. We started with a midfield diamond, looking for more dynamics in the center axis and making the full-backs become involved in the offensive process.

1st half

Game is 0-0. We are playing okay, lacking some width because the full-backs can’t give it during the whole time. We correct it, as well as we talked with the strikers, showing them that sometimes they will be the responsible to take that wider space, creating room in the center for the midfielders that are coming from behind. Easy and simple speech during half-time, with more individual feedbacks than a team talk.

2nd half

We lost 1-0. A sloppy mistake playing out from the back, giving possession away in a forbidden zone. I hope they learned with that mistake. It was worst if that happened in the semi-final. “Alright guys. You know that our approach to the game was soft and we can’t take it so easy in the semi-finals. No one was hurt and everybody is feeling okay so that is excellent. Rest between games, drink water and eat healthy! We will be back again at 4:00pm. Same intensity, concentration and focus from the first two games. Off we go!”

We know it was our responsibility for the way the team approached the game. We felt we could take it easy, so then we could be more assertive in the afternoon. They are mature enough to also understand that. They are focused on the same objective as us: win this tournament!

It is 4:00pm and we are back again at the fields. The players are looking so focused and concentrated, that the lost in the morning was good advice to them. Sometimes bad things have good effects! While they are getting ready to the warm-up (that is already set up), me and Marc are having some conversations with specific players, trying to give them more detailed roles in the game.

The warm-up is not running as well as I expected. I am feeling the players nerves, lacking quality in the basic technical actions, like passing and receiving. I have to stop it: “Hey! Calm down. Why are we lacking so much quality in the basic actions, like passing and receiving? There is no opposition here! Or is it a lack of concentration, or it is anxiety. Neither can happen! Yes, you should feel a little bit anxious, but you must use it in a good way. It is this added pressure to compete and play that will make you raise your focus and concentration for the game. The only thing that we expect from you is to give your best! Raise the expectation! Be brave and prove to yourselves that you can do it!”. They know that I am right. I said exactly what they are feeling. A small fear of failure, that should be more an anxiety to be successful. The next ten minutes were good. After the attack vs defense drill the players raised their confidence levels. “We know what we need to do. We have the quality to do it. We want to do it. It is all depending on us. No one else. Just us. So just step to that field with the right attitude and mindset. You will be succeeded, trust me!” Marc said just before the game. After it, I did a brief characterization of the opposition, with the details mentioned above. We are ready to do it. Strongest eleven will start the game.

1st half

“We are not playing good enough. We are lacking quality in the technical actions, as well as movement off the ball, being unable to receive the ball with time and space. The wingers are not doing their jobs, so we are missing width and passing lanes in the last third.” Marc said, while the players were drinking some water and resting during the half-time period. We are 1-0 down. “Also, reaction when we lose possession of the ball is being too slow, forcing us to run back 20 more yards when we should be able to win the ball back in the same zone.” He added. It was exactly the points that we have been talking during the first-half. “Do you remember how many times I have talked with you during practices about winning mentality?” I asked. “A lot!” Someone replied. “It is what this is about. When I am mentioning that, I am talking about moments like this. Where we need a winning mentality, a capability to compete with someone for something. It starts

in practices, competing in a scrimmage or in a drill. So then, we can transfer it to the games. I am sure that you have that mindset and that attitude. That you have the capability to turn this game, to step to the field and be more determinate than the opponent. That is the only way to win. Think about the small things that we have just talked about. Again, it depends on us! Me and Marc are going to be here tomorrow to play the final, make sure you will be here too!” It was a genuine speech. It was my passion for this game talking louder. The players felt it. We are going to turn this score.

2nd half

“Come on!” We won 2-1. What a performance in the second-half. The determination to turn this score since the very first minute of the second-half was amazing. It only took five minutes and we scored the equalizer. The team’s dynamics were so much better, the movement with and without the ball and the reaction to win the ball back. Also, we were defending more compact, avoiding spaces in the center axis and between lines. Particularly in the last ten minutes when we never stressed out. “Just a few words before you go. I was thinking to myself after the game yesterday. The true joy of a coach is when we can touch the key points in our speeches, practices, drills and we can clearly pass them to the players. Yesterday, in the second-half we did exactly what we have talked at the half-time. Today it was again the same. For us, as coaches, these are the moments where we feel fulfilled. Congratulations on your efforts and performances! We are one step away from reaching the final objective!”.

Day 4

I couldn’t really sleep. Since around 6:00am I am waking up every ten minutes, waiting for the moment to get up and prepare for the game. While we are having breakfast, I am talking with Marc about the starting eleven and last details to the pre-game speech. I think it is going to be the easiest one. A final is a great moment and everybody wants to play in it (or should be!).

We have plenty of space and time to the warm-up today. While the players are arriving, I am trying to read the feelings on their faces. Who is feeling confident, nervous or switched off. Most them are looking concentrated and ready. As I said a couple of times, they are mature and are used to this decisive moments.

Warm-up is running well. It is clearly the best of all four days. The pre-game speech is not going to be long. Focus on some specific behaviors that we need for this game, like the wingers supporting the full-backs in the defensive process, and the center midfielders looking for runs between the center-backs, or full-back and center-back. Appealing to their maximal determination in this game. Winning mentality that we talked about yesterday. Start the game strong and be determinate to win! "I just have one thing to add: someone one day said the following sentence, that I truly believe "We don't play finals, we win them!". This is the thought that you need for this game. Bring this trophy home with us!". Again, strongest team to start. The only score expected is the victory.

1st half

Great start. Intensity and tempo were excellent. We dominated possession, creating some finishing situations. We scored in a shot from outside of the box, but we could have scored, at least, one more goal. "We have to continue with the same intensity and attitude. This is only half-way, so any moment that we switched-off they can take advantage of it, turning the score. If needed, let's defend in a lower block and with the lines closer, avoiding spaces between lines." We are 1-0 at half-time.

2nd half

The first-half wouldn't make us think in such a nervous and intense second period. They came back to 1-2, in five minutes of pure lack of concentration. After that, we took a little bit to get back in the game, but happily we did it, turning the score again! I have been talking with a specific player about his lack of confidence in the last third, and the capability that I know he has, but he is not taking advantage of it. Sometimes he should be a little selfish making decisions in the last third, because he has quality to do it. If we never try, we will never make it and we will never be confident to do it again. I explained it to him again at half-time. He scored the two goals in the second-half. I celebrated them like if I have just won the world cup, because I felt an amazing joy! I know I gave that confidence to him, I made him believe in himself. That was my main trophy for the tournament. "Congratulations on your performances during this tournament. It was an amazing experience. The quality that we have been shown since the first game, raising every day, finishing in the best way possible. We achieved the objective that we all wanted. This is what sports is about.

Work hard, raising the expectation, with the specific objective of achieving something: a trophy, a personal goal, an objective!”.

3.3. Reflection

The experience of doing this logbook was very interesting for my own reflections and self-evaluation as a coach. The routine created every night, before I went to bed, helped me out making a concrete balance of my day, and particularly of my activity as a coach. These moments when I was sitting in front of the camera, aided me recapitulating the feelings and experiences of my practices, where I had to make constantly decisions and interacting with the players. Reviving key moments in the practice, as the management of the exercises, communication with the team or players, specific feedbacks, player's attitudes or team behaviors observed in the session, provided me the opportunity to rethink different solutions for the situation and what I could have done different.

I felt I am a little bit obsessive with the details that surrounded the context. Every little thing can make the difference for me. Therefore, I try to detect these details as soon as possible so I can think in one or many solutions for the situation/problem. For example: when I arrived at the fields, after analyzing the pitch dimensions and conditions, I looked for the better space to set up the warm-up, so it can run smoothly and without stopping. Thus, in the moment when we can step on to the field the transition between the warm-up drills is quicker. A lot of times, there is a game going occurring at the field that we are going to play, so we only have ten minutes on the field before the kick-off. It is important to take the maximum advantage of this time.

In my intervention as a coach, sometimes I might had been too intense in the sessions, constantly giving feedbacks (a lot of them positive and of encouragement) and making myself heard, ensuring that the intensity of the session is heightened. After a self-reflection over the time, I found some positives and negatives with this attitude. The fact that I am always keeping an interaction with the players, giving positive feedbacks, instructions, technical feedbacks, provoking some healthy some jokes with them, makes me feel active and participant of that session. Transmitting to the players a positive message, that I am there with them and they can count on me. Furthermore, I can make sure that the players are focused on the session and they receive constant feedback about their actions. However, I found some cons with these behaviors.

The main one (I don't want to say that is a specific negative point), it is the loss of influence that my interventions can have in some specific moments, because some of the players can get weary of constantly hearing my voice. That was something that I intent to work on, to improve during the season, as well as giving more time of the session without hearing my voice or with a lower frequency of feedbacks, being these feedbacks specific.

While performing a role as assistant coach, in the GPS Elite Charleston 2001 Boys team, I noticed one of my strengths, which consisted in connecting with the players in an outstanding way. Not being the head coach of the team, gave me more freedom to individually connect and interact with the players. I was able to comprehend carefully the individual strengths/weakness, such as develop a closer relationship with the players, without having a strongest position that a head coach sometimes needs. I found the right feedbacks and encouragement to the individuals in the right moments, maximizing their potential and strengths. This was something that made me feel succeeded in these "invisible" tasks.

In my vision of youth soccer, the development of the player as a person it is as important as the development as an athlete. We know the tough requirements needed to reach a professional level, being the percentage of athletes that achieve that reduced, when comparing to the amount of youth soccer participants. Although, I always work with the mindset that I have to do my best, providing my players the conditions to reach a professional level, if they expected and desire that. Therefore, I am demanding with the effort and attitude in the sessions and games. If we want to achieve an objective, we have to work towards it, hardly, focused, with the mindset that we want to be better. Raise the expectations is a personal goal that myself, and my players, need to be constantly thinking about. I believe sports it is a nice and funny way to teach the children the way that life goes.

As a limitation to my logbook, it is the frequency that I transcribed the recorded clips. Due to the lack of time and availability, I couldn't make it as often as expected, losing a lit bit of continuity in this written self-reflection process. Recording clips every night helped me a lot and it was a great method. If I had done a different process of registering the events and make my self-reflection more concrete, I believe I would have taken better outcome from this work. However, it was an excellent experience and I am thinking in introducing this method in my future jobs as a coach.

4. PURPOSE OF INTERVENTION ON THE YOUTH SOCCER MODEL: A GUIDING DOCUMENT

4.1. Introduction

Due to the diversity of situations provided, when the practice is properly guided, the team sports are a way of excellence of developing a person, emerging competences in different areas, featuring the tactic-cognitive, technique and socio-affective (Mesquita, as cited in Garganta, 1994).

The child wants to play and no matter the situation, do not take the game away as a learning fundamental form (Dufour, as cited in Queiroz, 1983). According to the study of Ford, Ward, Hodges & Williams (2009) that formulated the hypothesis that the time spent playing soccer contributes to succeed, since that reinforced by a high number of practicing time. Although, that practicing time as to be combined with an involvement in game situations.

This perspective highlights the game as the center of the teaching-learning process. The comprehension of its principles as tactical rules that guide the players' activity, performing effective decision-making, supporting the upcoming learning of complex game model principles.

The isolated technical training should be according to the player's needs, trying to be as much integrated in game forms as possible (Ferreira & Queiroz, 1982), where the information of the game is also present: attacker, defender, cooperation and a target.

Teodorescu (as cited in Queiroz, 1985) defines the exercise as the main preparation way of the players and teams. The most important aspect is to select the ones that are more effective and efficient for the performance's development, a coach's fundamental task. Queiroz (1985) refers the identity and the specificity as the fundamental characteristics of the training exercise.

Constraints that "afford opportunities for performers to stabilize or destabilize subsystems of play can be simulated (i.e. represented) in training tasks, allowing them to become better attuned to the information variables that constrain performance and to functionally couple information and movement during practice" (Davis, as cited in Villar, Araújo, Davis & Button, 2012). If the task constraints are manipulated by coaches during practice, emphasizes affordances that support successful performance of players. Space, time, number of players, number of targets and rules are some examples of constraints used in the exercises. The small-sided and conditioned games are a viable way to achieve this learning strategy (Villar et al., 2014). A small-sided game is a drill with

the same form of the game, but with a fewer numerical relation. On the other hand, a conditioned game it is a drill with a form, rules and constraints different from the regular game.

According to the behavior of the players and the team during the game, it is possible to define different game domain levels, according these four criteria (Garganta, as cited in Ribeiro & Volossovitch, 2004):

Table 7. Game domain levels (adapted from Garganta, as cited in Ribeiro & Volossovitch, 2004).

Spontaneous game	Intentional game	Structured game	Elaborated game
Spatial occupation depending on the ball	Spatial occupation depending the teammates and opponents	Rational space occupation	Strategic occupation of the space
Progression on the field depending on the ball	Progression on the field depending on the goal	Progression on the field depending on the teammates, opponents, ball and goal	Strategic progression on the field
Inefficient ball manipulation	Unsteady ball manipulation	Steady ball manipulation	Steady and creativity domain of the ball
Absence of cooperation	Intermittent “opportunistic” cooperation	Conscient cooperation	Subconscious cooperation (automatism)

The aim of this document is to propose an adjustment of the youth soccer plan, appropriating the matters and the game format of each age group, respecting the ability of the players and the developing and learning stages.

4.2. Methodology

The methodology used in this study is crucial to define and evaluate the main purpose of this research. The data consisted in analyzing the planning of the fall 2017 season, of the U9, U11

and U14 age groups, detailed research in each practice while taking into consideration the time planned for each exercise category: SAQ (Speed, agility and quickness drills), Playful (exercises with recreational and funny objectives), Technical exercises (analytic exercises to work on the technical actions), Fundamental Forms (game related exercises, characterized by finishing), Complementary Forms (game related drills, without finishing representative of the game) and Regular game.

Regarding the time scheduled for both Fundamental and Complementary forms, it was expected the time considering the number of attackers and defenders, 1,2,3 or more (7v7); 1,2,3,4 or more (9v9); 1,2,3,4,5 or more (11v11). Then, this numerical relation was associated with the principles and content taught in each age group, linking with the constraints present in the drills executed. The constraints mentioned are the examples used, but many more can be applied.

4.3. Sample

The sample of this study consists in 3 teams: U9 (10 players); U11 (12 players); U14 (16 players). This sample took place over the fall season, more exactly 15 weeks. The U9 and U11 teams had 2 practices per week, 30 in total. U14 team trained 3 times per week, 45 in total. All the practices were 75 minutes long.

4.4. Data Analysis

4.4.1. 7v7 game format

Table 8. Time and percentage of each exercise category.

Exercise category	Time (minutes)	Volume in the season
SAQ	40	2%
Playful	113	5%
Technical	453	20%
Fundamental Forms	850	38%
Complementary Forms	639	28%
Regular Game	155	7%

Table 9. Time and percentage of each technical action.

Technical action	Time (minutes)	Volume in the season
Juggling	131	6%
Skills	82	4%
Dribbling	86	4%
Passing & Receiving	154	7%

Table 10. Time and percentage of each phase.

Phase	Time (minutes)	Volume in the season
I	22	1%
II	319	14%
III	664	30%

Table 11. Time and percentage of the numerical relation.

Numerical relation	Time (minutes)	Volume in the season
Equality	991	44%
Advantage	445	20%
Disadvantage	213	9%

Throughout the 7v7 season (U9 age group), the table 1. above shows the minutes and the percentage spent in each category during the whole season. The fundamental forms are the main category, being the practice of finishing situations always present. The complementary forms also have a good component, where the drills can have one, two, three or four targets, instead of only one goal with a goalkeeper. The practice of the technical actions, with main relevance for juggling, passing and receiving are also a prominent factor, present in almost all the sessions' warm-ups. Coordination and skill acquisition were the lowest category practiced, due to the availability of some practice material. The short roster numbers didn't allow more practice time of regular game, being only possible when the session was combined with another team/age group.

The season was planned around four main topics: control and connect, attacking space, winning the ball back, finishing and shooting. These four topics were followed by a week of small-

sided games, combining all the content learned in the past four weeks. The season was organized in three mesocycles of five weeks, each week dedicated to a topic mentioned above.

Mesocycle 1

Table 12. Time and percentage of each exercise category.

Exercise category	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
SAQ	10	1%
Playful	30	4%
Juggling	57	8%
Skills	37	5%
Dribbling	47	6%
Passing & Receiving	43	6%

Table 13. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.

Number of defenders	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	141	19%
2	90	12%
3	50	7%
More than 3	245	33%

Table 14. Time and percentage of the number of attackers.

Number of attackers	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	108	14%
2	118	16%
3	50	7%
More than 3	245	33%

Table 15. Time and percentage of each phase.

Phase	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
I	10	1%
II	75	10%
III	245	33%

In the first mesocycle, the technical action of dribbling, combined with direction changing and skills had a bigger component than the rest of the season. During this period, new skills were introduced every week, challenging the players to execute them while progressing with the ball.

The first mesocycle is characterized by a low numerical relation, being majority the drills situations with one or two attackers and/or defenders. The only time that there were more than three attackers/defenders were in the game situations, with small-sided games, challenging the players with natural hitches and complexity consequent of the game. The focus was the practice of one or two specific game principles. Penetration and cover or mobility in offense, delay and cover in defense. Penetration and delay were the content to acquire in the end of this period. The spaces were bigger than the second and third mesocycle, providing more time and space for the player on the ball decide and execute the actions.

The phase III is predominant in this mesocycle. This phase is representative of building offensive situations in offense and avoiding the building of offensive situations in defense. It is characterized by the form: goalkeeper + attack vs defense + goalkeeper, present in the game situations (small-sided games almost of the time).

Mesocycle 2

Table 16. Time and percentage of each exercise category.

Exercise category	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
SAQ	20	3%
Playful	33	4%
Juggling	46	6%
Skills	37	5%

Dribbling	21	3%
Passing & Receiving	55	7%

Table 16. Time and percentage of each exercise category.

Table 17. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.

Number of defenders	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	97	13%
2	183	24%
3	167	22%
More than 3	91	12%

Table 18. Time and percentage of the number of attackers.

Number of attackers	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	86	11%
2	167	22%
3	164	22%
More than 3	91	12%

Table 19. Time and percentage of each phase.

Phase	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
I	12	2%
II	122	16%
III	176	23%

The passing and receiving technical actions started to get a relevance in this mesocycle, being the technical component worked for longer. The juggling skills still have a higher component, being vital for the ball manipulation work.

In this second mesocycle, there is a progression in the number of attackers/defenders. Here, the presence of 2 or 3 attackers and/or defenders is the main situation. Connect with this, it is the introduction of the third specific game principle. Penetration, cover and mobility in offense, while delay, cover and balance in defense. Although, the focus was on mobility and covers principles,

complementing the principles worked in the past mesocycle, allowing to progress and clearly achieve the third and fourth principles in the next mesocycle.

The creation of finishing situations in offense and avoid finishing situations in defense, represented by the phase II have a decent component in this period. It is characterized by the form: attack vs defense + goalkeeper.

Mesocycle 3

Table 20. Time and percentage of each exercise category.

Exercise category	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
SAQ	10	1%
Playful	50	7%
Juggling	28	4%
Skills	8	1%
Dribbling	18	2%
Passing & Receiving	56	7%

Table 21. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.

Number of defenders	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	70	9%
2	126	17%
3	141	19%
More than 3	243	32%

Table 22. Time and percentage of the number of attackers.

Number of attackers	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	38	5%
2	88	12%
3	193	26%
More than 3	236	31%

Table 23. Time and percentage of each phase.

Phase	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
I	0	0%
II	122	16%
III	243	32%

As the previous mesocycle, in this one the passing and receiving technical actions are the main factor practiced of the technical actions. There is a highlight for the playful component, particularly due to the last week of practices, where some funny games were done in the warm-ups.

The numerical relation continues to progress, with a dominant presence of three or more attackers and/or defenders. The content to be acquire was execution of the three specific offensive principles, with a brief introduction of the fourth one (space), as well as the three specific defensive principles, also with a brief introduction of the fourth one (concentration).

The phase II and III are predominant again. Working on the building and creation of finishing situations was the main objective in offense. Otherwise, being able to oppose and avoid that while in the defensive process.

4.4.2. 9v9 game format

Table 24. Time and percentage of each exercise category.

Exercise category	Time (minutes)	Volume in the season
SAQ	85	4%
Playful	80	4%
Technical	475	21%
Fundamental Forms	760	34%
Complementary Forms	765	34%
Regular Game	85	4%

Table 25. Time and percentage of each technical action.

Technical action	Time (minutes)	Volume in the season
Juggling	115	5%
Skills	82	4%
Dribbling	73	3%
Passing & Receiving	205	9%

Table 26. Time and percentage of each phase.

Phase	Time (minutes)	Volume in the season
I	46	2%
II	371	16%
III	448	20%

Table 27. Time and percentage of each numerical relation.

Numerical relation	Time (minutes)	Volume in the season
Equality	675	30%
Advantage	726	32%
Disadvantage	104	5%

The U11 age group season (9v9 game) is categorized by a strong component of fundamental and complementary forms (68% of the time in total). The fundamental forms are mainly characterized by finishing situations, while the fundamental forms can have none, one or multiple-targets. The technical component has still a high relevance in this age group, highlighting the practice of passing and receiving technical actions, that have the highest working time throughout the season. Like the U9 age group, coordination and skill acquisition have a practice restriction, due to the availability of the SAQ stuff. Also, the short roster numbers didn't allow more practice time of regular game, being only possible when the session was combined with another team/age group.

The season was based in five main topics: attacking at speed, possession/movement, defending, wide play/finishing, combos/switch. Comparatively to the 7v7 planning, there is no

small-sided games week, being the mesocycle composed by the five topics mentioned above. There were three mesocycles throughout the season.

Mesocycle 1

Table 28. Time and percentage of each exercise category.

Exercise category	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
SAQ	25	3%
Playful	20	3%
Juggling	40	5%
Skills	40	5%
Dribbling	40	5%
Passing & Receiving	65	9%

Table 29. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.

Number of defenders	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	125	17%
2	130	17%
3	105	14%
4	60	8%
More than 4	100	13%

Table 30. Time and percentage of the number of attackers.

Number of attackers	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	75	10%
2	120	16%
3	120	16%
4	30	4%
More than 4	175	23%

Table 31. Time and percentage of each phase.

Phase	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
I	0	0%
II	115	15%
III	125	17%

The first mesocycle has the higher component of dribbling and skills. These two factors are related and associated with different types of turnings and direction changing. This was the period of the season where these technical actions were challenged the most, with the introduction of new skills every session/week. The passing and receiving technical actions are the ones that more practice time was spent working on.

During these first five weeks, the drills were mainly characterized by one, two or three attackers/defenders. At this period, the specific game principles were recapped, starting the connecting between them and the game model macro principles. Penetration, cover and mobility in offense, while in defense, delay, cover and balance were the focus, despite the space and concentration were also present. The only time that more than 3 defenders/attacker were present was in the game situations.

This is the mesocycle where the lowest numbers were registered for phase II and phase III, without any minute registered for the phase I.

Mesocycle 2

Table 32. Time and percentage of each exercise category.

Exercise category	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
SAQ	30	4%
Playful	20	3%
Juggling	40	5%
Skills	27	4%
Dribbling	18	2%
Passing & Receiving	70	9%

Table 33. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.

Number of defenders	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	46	6%
2	72	10%
3	153	20%
4	101	13%
More than 4	173	23%

Table 34. Time and percentage of the number of attackers.

Number of attackers	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	47	6%
2	49	7%
3	62	8%
4	109	15%
More than 4	278	37%

Table 35. Time and percentage of each phase.

Phase	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
I	36	5%
II	126	17%
III	173	23%

Comparing to the previous mesocycle, there is a drop on the time spent working on dribbling and skills. The juggling and passing and receiving components are the focus of the technical actions.

In this period, there is an increase in the numerical relation. The drills are most of the time with 4 or more attackers, while the defenders were mainly 3 or more. This shows a numerical advantage for the attackers, giving them more changes of success. The game model macro principles were the focus of this mesocycle (with more emphasis to the offensive ones), always establishing the connection with the game specific principles.

It was registered the higher value of phase I (finishing), worked with patterns of play, executing different team movements. Although, the phase II and III were still the main ones. The phase III was the one where the higher time was spent on.

Mesocycle 3

Table 36. Time and percentage of each exercise category.

Exercise category	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
SAQ	30	4%
Playful	40	5%
Juggling	35	5%
Skills	15	2%
Dribbling	15	2%
Passing & Receiving	70	9%

Table 37. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.

Number of defenders	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	50	7%
2	40	5%
3	180	24%
4	145	19%
More than 4	155	21%

Table 38. Time and percentage of the number of attackers.

Number of attackers	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	40	5%
2	35	5%
3	75	10%
4	90	12%
More than 4	305	41%

Table 39. Time and percentage of each phase.

Phase	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
I	10	1%
II	130	17%
III	150	20%

One more time, there is an emphasis on the passing and receiving technical actions, that were the technical actions of support for the drills with the objective possession of the ball. There is still a good component of juggling being present, representative of ball manipulation.

Almost half of the practice time were drills with more than 4 attackers, creating a numerical advantage for the attack. However, there is an increase of the opposition, being registered more time working with 4 or more defenders. The mesocycle's priority were still the game model macro principles, but now with more emphasis for the defensive ones.

4.4.3. 11v11 game format

Table 40. Time and percentage of each exercise category.

Exercise category	Time (minutes)	Volume in the season
SAQ	135	4%
Playful	75	2%
Technical	405	12%
Fundamental Forms	1298	38%
Complementary Forms	1372	41%
Regular Game	90	3%

Table 41. Time and percentage of each technical action.

Technical action	Time (minutes)	Volume in the season
Juggling	95	3%
Skills	55	2%
Dribbling	40	1%
Passing & Receiving	215	6%

Table 42. Time and percentage of each phase.

Phase	Time (minutes)	Volume in the season
I	10	0%
II	695	21%
III	678	20%

Table 43. Time and percentage of each numerical relation.

Numerical relation	Time (minutes)	Volume in the season
Equality	694	21%
Advantage	1717	51%
Disadvantage	229	7%

Comparing to the other teams, the U14 age group season has a much lower value registered in the technical training. On the other hand, the time spent on fundamental and complementary forms is much higher (79% in total). This can be justified because some of the technical training was done with opposition, integrated in drills with complementary forms, like 3x1 or 4x2. Although, when the technical training was done with artificial drills (un-opposed) the passing and receiving technical actions were still the priority. Although, the attention was focused on details, such as receive on the backfoot, body shape oriented to receive the ball, positive and negative touches. The SAQ work has more relevance, where some strength and conditioning training was integrated, allowing the practice of different physical abilities. One more time, due to the short roster numbers, the regular game was only possible when the session was combined with another team.

The season was split in three non-equal mesocycles, being the first one six weeks, the second five weeks and the third four weeks. The topics planned for the season were: combination play, counter-attack, defending/pressing, attacking wide areas, progressive possession, changing the point of attack. All these topics composed the first mesocycle. The second didn't have the counter-attack topic, and the third was combination play, defending/pressing, counter-attack and attacking wide areas.

Mesocycle 1

Table 44. Time and percentage of each exercise category.

Exercise category	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
SAQ	60	4%
Playful	10	1%
Juggling	45	3%
Skills	25	2%
Dribbling	15	1%
Passing & Receiving	90	7%

Table 45. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.

Number of defenders	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	138	10%
2	188	14%
3	280	21%
4	255	19%
5	94	7%
More than 5	125	9%

Table 46. Time and percentage of the number of attackers

Number of attackers	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	68	5%
2	128	9%
3	215	16%
4	115	9%
5	90	7%
6	320	24%
More than 6	169	13%

Table 47. Time and percentage of each phase.

Phase	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
I	5	0%
II	240	18%
III	230	17%

In this mesocycle were registered the higher values of time spent working on the passing and receiving technical actions, that were the priority of the technical training throughout the season.

The numerical relation in this mesocycle was kept low. The drills were mostly done with two, three or four defenders, representing the recap work about the specific defensive game principles. The lower number of defenders per drill also represents the interpersonal coordination between players of the same sector, examples: the center-back and the full-back; the three midfielders; the four defenders. About the number of attackers, the higher values registered were three and six attackers. This represents the recap of the offensive game principles, as well as work on the interpersonal coordination between the three midfielders, the three attackers, and between the three midfielders and the three attackers.

It was spent in total 35% of the time working on phase II or III, where the game model principles were practiced.

Mesocycle 2

Table 48. Time and percentage of each exercise category.

Exercise category	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
SAQ	30	3%
Playful	35	3%
Juggling	35	3%
Skills	20	2%
Dribbling	15	1%
Passing & Receiving	70	6%

Table 49. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.

Number of defenders	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	49	4%
2	67	6%
3	177	16%
4	232	21%
5	240	21%
More than 5	75	7%

Table 50. Time and percentage of the number of attackers.

Number of attackers	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	32	3%
2	57	5%
3	49	4%
4	100	9%
5	130	12%
6	174	15%
More than 6	233	21%

Table 51. Time and percentage of each phase.

Phase	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
I	0	0%
II	250	22%
III	243	22%

The passing and receiving technical actions are, again, the most practiced in this mesocycle.

The numerical relation in this mesocycle is higher than the first one. The number of defenders that mostly composed the drills were four or five, while the attackers were five, six or more. In this mesocycle the work on the sectoral and intersectoral principles were the main objectives (ex: back 4, coordination between the defensive and middle sectors, or middle and offensive sectors).

The work on phase II and III increases to 44% in total. This is representative of the practice of the game model principles in these two phases.

Mesocycle 3

Table 52. Time and percentage of each exercise category.

Exercise category	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
SAQ	45	5%
Playful	30	3%
Juggling	15	2%
Skills	10	1%
Dribbling	10	1%
Passing & Receiving	55	6%

Table 53. Time and percentage of the number of defenders.

Number of defenders	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	40	4%
2	70	8%
3	115	13%
4	125	14%
5	150	17%
More	235	26%

Table 54. Time and percentage of the number of attackers.

Number of attackers	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
1	30	3%
2	50	6%
3	65	7%
4	50	6%
5	50	6%
6	160	18%
More than 6	260	29%

Table 55. Time and percentage of each phase.

Phase	Time (minutes)	Volume in the mesocycle
I	5	1%
II	205	23%
III	205	23%

Like the previous mesocycles, it was working on the passing and receiving technical actions that more time was spent on.

In this mesocycle the numerical relation is the higher one, being majority of the drills done with six or more attackers/defenders. A higher numerical relation promotes more collective behaviors, sectoral and intersectoral. It is also representative of the connection between the three phases. Example: defenders and midfielders; midfielders and attackers; introduction of the full-backs on the offensive phase II and I.

4.5. Reflection/Conclusion

Queiroz (1983) concluded that the game is the basic learning form and its complex requirements (level of complexity) the center of all learning stages. The drills that involve game situations and competition give more success to the learning process, because they meet the youth expectations with multiple challenges representative of the competition (Heddergott, as cited in Queiroz, 1983).

According to Ferreira (1983), before the youth players met the complex collective actions and a system of play well defined, they should learn the basic game principles, offensive and defensive. The first stages of learning are the preparation for the future, being the practices and competition the way of formation and not the way to obtain immediate high performances. The same author indicates the predominant use of the global methodology (the game) and constant analysis of the observed behaviors.

The priority of the first learning stage (7v7 game) was the specific game principles (offensive and defensive). The game was the center of the learning process, being majority of the drills representative of it. Throughout the season, in 45% of the time finishing was present (it could

be to a regular goal or small goals), being 30% of that game situations (mostly small-sided or conditioned games). Queiroz (1983) mentioned the finishing has the fundamental goal to achieve. It is the finishing as the drills' objective that inductees a strong motivation factor in the child.

The season's structure met the guiding principles referred by Queiroz in 1983. The drills started with a lower number of players, being the opposition introduced progressively. In order to intensify the execution of technical-tactical actions, the numerical relations were kept low during the season. When a quicker execution and decision making was expected, the space was reduced. On the other hand, if the objective was promoting a better space awareness and decision making, the space increased.

The practice of the technical actions by artificial drills had a good component, providing a high number of repetitions. The technical drills were mostly composed by two or three players, without opposition, that allowed the player to acquire and improve the motor action and correct technique. As referred by Ferreira (1983) the learning of technical actions can't be reduced to the execution of gestures as a solution to isolated problems. The player has to acquire the ability of decision-making according to the different situations during the game, providing creativity. Thus, the practice of technical actions was integrated in the complementary forms, that allowed the player to combine both abilities: technical execution and decision-making.

The game principles are the tactical rules that guide the players' activity. They constitute a way of guiding the players actions, allowing the player to intervene in the different situations of the game (Ramos, 2002). The practice of each specific game principle can be characterized by fundamental or complementary forms. The constraints present in the drills, induce the desired behaviors in the players. Each drill and form have a main objective, but secondary objectives can be present as well. The table below shows the forms and constraints associated to the practice of each game specific principle.

Table 56. Association between the offensive game specific principles, forms and constraints.

Principles	Forms	Constraints
Penetration	1x1; 1+1x1; 1x2; 2x1; 1x0+Gk; 1x1+Gk; 1x2+Gk; 2x1+Gk	Score dribbling through a gate/line; Box of different shapes (diamond, square) promoting 1x1; multiple-targets
Cover	2x1; 2x2; 3x2; 1+2x1; 1+2x2; 2x1+Gk; 2x2+Gk; 3x2+Gk; 1+2x1+Gk; 1+2x2+Gk; Gk+2x2+Gk; Gk+1+2x2+Gk; Gk+3x3+Gk; Gk+1+3x3+Gk;	Box of different shapes (diamond, square) promoting 1x1; multiple-targets; players in different spaces/lines; player restrict to a space/zone
Mobility	2x1; 2x2; 3x2; 1+2x1; 1+2x2; 3x3; 2x1+Gk; 2x2+Gk; 3x2+Gk; 1+2x1+Gk; 1+2x2+Gk; 3x3+Gk; Gk+2x2+Gk; Gk+1+2x2+Gk; Gk+3x3+Gk; Gk+1+3x3+Gk;	Players in different spaces/lines; field divided in 3 lanes; multiple-targets in different lanes; wide space
Space	Gk+1+3x3+Gk; Gk+2+3x3+Gk; Gk+4x4+Gk; Gk+5x5+Gk; Gk+7x7+Gk	Field divide in 3 lanes; wide and/or deep neutrals; lane's occupation rule; multiple-targets in different lanes; extra points if the ball goes in the three lanes before score

Table 57. Association between the defensive game specific principles, forms and constraints.

Principles	Forms	Constraints
Delay	1x1; 1+1x1; 1x2; 2x1; 1x0+Gk; 1x1+Gk; 1x2+Gk; 2x1+Gk	Score dribbling through a gate/line; Box of different shapes (diamond, square) as a reference to the body shape; multiple-targets
Cover	1x2; 2x2; 1+2x2; 3x2; 3x3; 1x2+Gk; 2x2+Gk; 3x2+Gk; 3x3+Gk; 4x2+Gk; Gk+2x2+Gk; Gk+1+2x2+Gk; Gk+3x3+Gk; Gk+1+3x3+Gk;	Box of different shapes (diamond, square) as a reference of where the cover should be; players in different spaces/lines; player restrict to a space/zone
Balance	2x2; 1+2x2; 3x2; 3x3; 2x2+Gk; 3x2+Gk; 3x3+Gk; Gk+2x2+Gk; Gk+1+2x2+Gk; Gk+3x3+Gk; Gk+1+3x3+Gk;	Players in different spaces/lines; field divided in 3 lanes; multiple-targets in different lanes; wide space
Concentration	Gk+1+3x3+Gk; Gk+2+3x3+Gk; Gk+4x4+Gk; Gk+5x5+Gk; Gk+7x7+Gk	Field divide in 3 lanes; lane's occupation rule; multiple-targets in different lanes; extra points if a goal is scored in the center lane

The understanding of the game specific principles provides to the player a basis of tactical knowledge and repertoire of decision-making, according to the multiple situations that happen in a game. The more solutions the better capability to execute. This is the first stage of tactical knowledge, providing to the player the ability to learn principles of a game model in the following stages.

The second learning stage (9v9 game) brings more collective complex actions to the game (Ferreira, 1983), due to the increase of players on the field and pitch dimensions. The game

principles in this stage should be consolidate, supporting the players to improve their tactical knowledge and better understand the system and style of play to be introduced.

There is a connection between the game principles (fundamental and specific) and the team's game model macro principles. In offense: 1. Possessive progression to finishing; 2. Constant offensive covers guaranteeing the balance of the team in case that possession is lost; 3. Player's mobility, occupying free spaces and creating new passing lanes; 4. Width creating space and depth allowing the team to reach the finishing zone. In defense: 1. Stop the opposition's counter-attack, delaying the attack, giving time for the team organizes themselves defensively; 2. Covers to the player pressuring the ball; 3. Marking the closest players, occupying rationally the space and blocking the passing lanes; 4. Concentration reducing the distances between players and taking width and depth away from the opposite team.

The table below shows the forms and constraints associated to the practice of the team's principles.

Table 58. Association between the offensive team's principles, forms and constraints.

Principles	Forms	Constraints
Possessive progression to finishing	2+4x4; 6x3; 4+6x4; 7x3; 2+3x3+Gk; 4x2+Gk; 4x3+Gk; 5x3+Gk; 5x4+Gk; Gk+1+3x3+Gk; Gk+3+3x3+Gk; Gk+4x4+Gk; Gk+2+4x4+Gk;	Possession of the ball; Number of passes as a point; Number of passes before achieving an objective; Field split in sectors; Reach an area as an objective; Transition from one area to another
Constant offensive covers guaranteeing the balance of the team	1+2x2; 3x2; 1+3x3; 4x2; 2+4x4; 5x3; 3x2+Gk; 4x3+Gk; 5x3+Gk; Gk+1+3x3+Gk; Gk+4x4+Gk Gk+2+4x4+Gk;	Player restrict to a space/zone; Players in different spaces/lines; Player always behind the ball; multiple-targets

Player's mobility, occupying free spaces and creating new passing lanes	2x1; 3x2; 3x3; 1+3x3; 4x2; 4x3; 4x4; 2+4x4; 5x3; 6x4; 3x2+Gk; 3x3+Gk; 2+3x3+Gk; 4x3+Gk; 5x4+Gk; Gk+3x3+Gk; Gk+3+3x3+Gk; Gk+4x4+Gk; Gk+2+4x4+Gk	Interchange position as an objective; Swap position/space before score; multiple-targets; players in different spaces/zones; transition from one area/space to another
Width creating space and depth allowing the team to reach the finishing zone	3x3; 1+3x3; 4x4; 2+4x4; 2+5x5; 3x3+Gk; 4x3+Gk; 5x4+Gk; Gk+3+3x3+Gk; Gk+2+4x4+Gk; Gk+4x4+Gk; Gk+5x5+Gk	Field divide in lanes and/or sectors; wide and/or deep neutrals; lane's occupation rule; multiple-targets in different lanes; dribble through gates before finishing; target players; wide spaces

Table 58. Association between the offensive team's principles, forms and constraints.

Table 59. Association between the defensive team's principles, forms and constraints.

Principles	Forms	Constraints
Stop the opposition's counter-attack, delaying the attack, giving time for the team organizes themselves defensively	1x2; 1+2x2; 2x3; 3x3; 1+3x3; 4x4; 2+4x4; 3x3+Gk; 4x3+Gk; 5x3+Gk; Gk+3x3+Gk; Gk+3+3x3+Gk; Gk+2+4x4+Gk; Gk+5x5+Gk	Limit of time to win the ball back; Preferential zone to win the ball back; Quick objective to the defensive team when they win the ball back; Field divided in sectors
Covers to the player pressuring the ball	1x2; 2x2; 1+2x2; 3x2; 3x3; 1x2+Gk; 2x2+Gk; 3x2+Gk; 3x3+Gk; 4x2+Gk; 4x3+Gk; 5x3+Gk; Gk+2x2+Gk;	Box of different shapes (diamond, square) as a reference of where the covers should be; players in different spaces/lines; attack has to

	Gk+1+2x2+Gk; Gk+3x3+Gk; Gk+1+3x3+Gk;	dribble through gates before finishing
Marking the closest players, occupying rationally the space and blocking the passing lanes	3x3; 1+3x3; 4x3; 4x4; 2+4x4; 5x3; 6x4; 3x3+Gk; 2+3x3+Gk; 4x3+Gk; 5x4+Gk; Gk+3x3+Gk; Gk+3+3x3+Gk; Gk+4x4+Gk; Gk+2+4x4+Gk	Field divide in 3 lanes; Possession as the objective for the attacking team; shorter spaces; Players in different spaces/zones; Transition from one are to another; Wide neutrals
Concentration reducing the distances between players and taking width and depth away from the opposite team	4x4; 2+4x4; 2+5x5; 4x3+Gk; 5x4+Gk; Gk+3+3x3+Gk; Gk+2+4x4+Gk; Gk+5x5+Gk	All the players have to reach a zone before they score; Attack has to dribble through gates before finishing; Field divided in lanes and/or sectors; lane's occupation rule; wide spaces

Table 59. Association between the defensive team's principles, forms and constraints.

The game model macro principles are the main ideas for each moment of the game (attack or defense) across the team. The understanding of these principles supports the player comprehension of the principles associated to each phase of the game, according to the different sectors and positions.

In the third learning stage (11v11 game) begins the progressive specialization of tasks and roles (Ferreira, 1983). As mentioned before, the offense and defense moments are composed by three phases. Each phase has sub principles that guide the players' behaviors, according to their positions and roles. The coordination between players of the same sector, and between different sectors is vital to the successful accomplishment of the tactical actions.

Working on specific roles and positions is linked with lower numerical relations, providing the opportunity to occur more individual behaviors and touches on the ball (Garcia, Román, Calleja-González & Dellal, 2014). Progressively, there is a growth of the number of players

providing situations to work on the coordination between players of the same sector, and afterwards between sectors.

The tables below show the coordination between positions and the improvement on the numerical relation, associated with the forms and constraints used, in both offensive and defensive moments.

Table 60. Association between the sectoral work, forms and constraints.

Positions	Forms	Constraints
Center backs	2x2; 3x2; 4x2; 2x2+Gk; 3x2+Gk; 4x2+Gk; Gk+2x2+Gk; Gk+4x4+Gk	Multi-targets; Field divided in lanes; Players restrict to a specific area
Center back(s) and full back(s)	2x2; 3x2; 4x2; 4x3; 4x4; 1+4x4; 2x2+Gk; 3x2+Gk; 4x2+Gk; 4x3+Gk; Gk+2x2+Gk; Gk+4x4+Gk; Gk+2+4x4+Gk;	Multi-targets; Field divided in lanes; Restricted number of players in one zone; Attack has to dribble through gates before finishing
Goalkeeper and defenders	2+4x4; 4x3+Gk; 6x4+Gk; Gk+2x2+Gk; Gk+3x3+Gk; Gk+4x4+Gk; Gk+1+4x4+Gk	Field divided in lanes and/or sectors; Targets in different zones; Players in different spaces/lines
Holding midfielder and two center midfielders	1+2x2; 3x3; 2+3x3; 3+3x3; 3x3+Gk; 2+3x3+Gk; Gk+3x3+Gk; Gk+3+3x3+Gk	Field divided in lanes and/or sectors; Reach an area as an objective; Bonus point if receive the ball in one area
Two center midfielders	2x2; 2+2x2; 2x2+Gk; 1+2x2+Gk; Gk+2x2+Gk; Gk+2+2x2+Gk; Gk+4x4+Gk	Field divided in lanes; Reach an area as an objective; Bonus point if receive the ball in one area; Multi-targets

Wingers and striker	3×2 ; 3×2 ; $2 + 3 \times 3$; $3 \times 2 + \text{Gk}$; $3 \times 3 + \text{Gk}$; $2 + 3 \times 3 + \text{Gk}$; $\text{Gk} + 3 \times 3 + \text{Gk}$; $\text{Gk} + 3 + 3 \times 3 + \text{Gk}$; $\text{Gk} + 4 \times 4 + \text{Gk}$	Field divided in lanes; Attack has to dribble through gates before finishing; Restricted number of players in one zone; Multi-targets; Wide and/or deep neutrals; Wider spaces
---------------------	---	--

Table 60. Association between the sectoral work, forms and constraints.

Table 61. Association between the intersectoral work, forms and constraints.

Positions	Forms	Constraints
Center backs and holding midfielder	$1 + 2 \times 2$; 3×2 ; 3×3 ; $2 + 3 \times 3$; $2 + 4 \times 4$; $3 \times 3 + \text{Gk}$; $2 + 3 \times 3 + \text{Gk}$; $\text{Gk} + 3 \times 3 + \text{Gk}$; $\text{Gk} + 3 + 3 \times 3 + \text{Gk}$; $\text{Gk} + 4 \times 4 + \text{Gk}$	Field divided in lanes and/or sectors; Reach an area as an objective; Bonus point if receive the ball in one area; Multi-targets
Defenders and Midfielders	$4 + 3 \times 3$; $2 + 4 \times 4$; $2 + 5 \times 5$; 6×4 ; 7×3 ; $6 \times 4 + \text{Gk}$; $6 \times 6 + \text{Gk}$; $6 \times 7 + \text{Gk}$; $\text{Gk} + 2 + 4 \times 4 + \text{Gk}$; $\text{Gk} + 4 + 4 \times 4 + \text{Gk}$; $\text{Gk} + 5 \times 5 + \text{Gk}$; $\text{Gk} + 6 \times 6 + \text{Gk}$	Field divided in lanes and/or sectors; Multi-targets; Reach an area as an objective; Number of passes before achieving an objective
Midfielders and Attackers	$3 + 3 \times 3$; $2 + 5 \times 5$; 6×4 ; $2 + 6 \times 4$ $6 \times 4 + \text{Gk}$; $6 \times 6 + \text{Gk}$; $6 \times 7 + \text{Gk}$; $\text{Gk} + 2 + 4 \times 4 + \text{Gk}$; $\text{Gk} + 5 \times 5 + \text{Gk}$; $\text{Gk} + 6 \times 6 + \text{Gk}$	Attack has to dribble through gates before finishing; Multi-targets; Field divided in lanes and/or sectors; Wider spaces; Number of passes before achieving an objective
Wingers and full backs	2×1 ; 2×2 ; 4×2 ; $2 + 4 \times 4$; $2 \times 1 + \text{Gk}$; $2 \times 2 + \text{Gk}$; $4 \times 2 + \text{Gk}$; $2 + 6 \times 7 + \text{Gk}$; $6 \times 4 + \text{Gk}$;	Players in opposite spaces/lines; Multi-targets; Field divided in lanes and/or

	6x6+Gk; 6x7+Gk; Gk+2+4x4+Gk; Gk+5x5+Gk; Gk+6x6+Gk	sectors; Reach an area as an objective; Wide and/or deep neutrals
--	---	---

Table 61. Association between the intersectoral work, forms and constraints.

The game model is composed fundamentally by the interactions between players, opponents and the ball, in the different moments of the game (Mourinho, as cited in Nascimento & Magalhães, 2010). The micro principles of this game model guide the players activities, according to their roles and positions. For achieving the same tactical behaviors, the game model has macro principles, that lead the team's objectives for each moment and phase of the game.

4.6. Innovation/Practical suggestion

Garcia et al. (2014) showed the relevance of reduced spaces in learning how to play soccer. Players are involved in more decision-making and moves in small-sided formats, which results in a greater volume of these in practice (learning and training) and in the technical and tactical variables. One of the key considerations when organizing a small-sided soccer match is to choose a format that gives the players a sense of freedom that encourages their creativity and hence lets them discover various playing possibilities (Kelly and Drust, as cited in Garcia et al., 2014).

It is important to begin the learning of the game from a lower numerical relation, thus providing more opportunities for the players to interact in the game, as well as a higher ration of touches on the ball per game (Almeida et al., 2013; Garcia et al., 2014). By this same token, while developing a tactical knowledge and technical ability, and by increasing the number of players on the field, it will promote for the rise of the information available on the game. At this moment, the youth players are more (and better) prepared to make-decisions based on their technical-tactical actions.

The learning in these small-sided situations is complemented with some artificial technical practice, if needed. This will provide a high number of repetitions to the athletes, executing the correct techniques. By the time that the right technique is acquire, the focus starts to be on details of the execution of these technical actions, like receive on the backfoot, body shape orientation when receive the ball, positive or negative touches.

The objective of the first stage is to explore the two moments of the game (offense and defense). Starting by learning the game principles (the specifics and the fundamentals), trying to apply them in the small-sided game situations (Borges, Guilherme, Rechenchosky, Costa and Rinadi, 2017). This first stage begins with a 5-a-side game (Gk+4x4+Gk, with smaller goals than the 7-a-side game) from the age of U6 to U8. This is representative of the first development stage (formation/initiation), where the individual's actions are mostly presented. In the early ages, the game domain level normally is the spontaneous game. In the older ages of this stage, it could be observed the intentional game.

The second stage, 7-a-side game, aims to consolidate the game principles, when the player can apply them in the game situations, and in a higher numerical relation. The player is not intervening in the center of the game as much as the 5-a-side, but still has a very positive and active participation in the game (Garcia et al., 2014). This is still the first development stage (formation/initiation), from the ages of U9 to U11, although the game domain level observed is the intentional game in the early ages, the structured game is also observed through this stage.

The third stage, 9-a-side game, is the beginning of the pre-specialization, from the ages of U12 to U13. It introduces the macro principles of a team. The player should have acquired the game principles as well as comprehended the moments of the game at this stage. By combining these factors, the players should be able to interpret the different situations that occur in the game, while at the same time, performing effective decision-making processes. The moments start to be divided in three phases, associating the team principles to each moment. The game domain level is structured game, but in teams with a high level of ability the elaborated game can be identified.

The fourth stage, 11-a-side game, is the starting of the player's specialization from the ages of U14 to U16. It is the moment when the players start to focus themselves in specific roles and positions, thus acquiring specific principles associated to each position and role. There is a higher level of complexity and repetitions in the technical-tactical drills, increasing the execution speed and accuracy performing these drills. If the basis tactical knowledge is adequate, the specific game model principles start to be acquired and highlighted.

The fifth stage, betterment – 1st stage, from the ages of U17 to U19, is the last one that could be applied in the club (18 years old is the older age). The technical-tactical preparation has the aim to achieve high performances in a mid-term, based in increasingly specific practices. There

is an individual work on the strongest points, with higher performance requirements, increasing the complexity and execution speed of the technical-tactical drills.

Below there is a summary of this practical suggestion, adapting the development stages proposed by Ferreira (1983) to the different game formats and age groups, adjusting the content to be learned in each one. It is important to highlight one more time, that in this purpose, the game is center of the teaching-learning process.

Formation/Initiation – 1st stage

- Ages: U6 to U8
- Game format: 5v5
- Learning priorities
 - Explore the two moments of the game (offense and defense);
 - Start the learning of the game specific principles;
 - Improvement of the ball manipulation and control skills.

Formation/Initiation – 2nd stage

- Ages: U9 to U11
- Game format: 7v7
- Learning priorities
 - Clear comprehension of the two moments of the game;
 - Consolidation of the game specific principles applying them in game situations;
 - High practice frequency of the passing and receiving technical actions, acquiring the right technique.

Pre-specialization

- Ages: U12 to U13
- Game format: 9v9
- Learning priorities

- Interpret the different situations in the game performing effective decision-making processes;
- Comprehension of the macro principles of the team, understanding the three phases of each moment;
- Highlight details in the technical actions as receive on the backfoot, body shape orientation and positive or negative touches.

Specialization

- Ages: U14 to U16
- Game format: 11v11
- Learning priorities
 - Beginning of the specialization in a position or role;
 - Acquisition of the specific principles associated to each position and role;
 - Rise of the execution speed and accuracy performing the technical-tactical drills.

Betterment – 1st stages

- Ages: U17 to U19
- Game format: 11v11
- Learning priorities
 - Acquire the principles of the team's game model;
 - Achieve high performances in a mid-term, based in increasingly specific practices;
 - Maximize the individual work on the strongest points.

5. TRAINING TO COMPETE: THE DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS OF THE TRAINING PROCESS IN SOCCER

5.1. Introduction

The sport of soccer, as any other sport, requires an essential point for acquiring and consolidating knowledge obtaining a greater and better degree of practical content.

The training process assumes a central role in the preparation of competitive soccer teams, providing training methods and ideas. Debating and sharing of knowledge and experience is a great way to learn and teach the training process and its methodologies. In soccer, as other collective sporting modalities, training allows us to identify some factors in terms of better understanding and interpretation of the game. In this way, it is through the training process that the behaviors and ideas are intended to be applied in the competition.

Supporting the same idea, the set of theoretical-practical activities proposed for the seminars to be held on Soccer Day of the Sports Training Week of the Faculty of Human Kinetics (Faculdade de Motricidade Humana), with the theme "Soccer: Training to compete", consisted on the participation of students and coaches. Throughout this training, the focus was directed to action and interprets through different perspectives of the training in soccer, as several dimensions that make up the training process of a team, with a view to their preparation for a competition.

5.2. Event Description

Target-market

The participants of this seminar were football students as well as the coaches who shared the same interests in obtaining more experiences and knowledge in this field.

Date

Thursday, May 18th, 2017

Schedule

The event was divided in two parts: theoretical and practical. The sessions of theory were presented at “Salao Nobre” and it were followed by the practical sessions, which were held at the turf field of the “Complexo Desportivo do Jamor”.

Morning

8:45 am - Opening Session

9:00 am to 10:00 am - Session 1: "From Game Plan Analysis: How to Train Strategy?" (Ricardo Santos - National Team A)

10:00 am- 11:00 am - Session 2: "The complementary training in Football: Prevention and Potentiation" (José Herculano - Vitória FC)

11:00 am – 11:30 am - Coffee Break

11:30 am - 12:30 am- Session 3: "The formation of the soccer player: the perspective of the Coordinator Technician "(João Santos - Technical Coordinator of SL Benfica and Valter Dias – Coordinator Technical of SG Sacavenense)

12:15 am – 14:00 am - Lunch Break

Afternoon

14:00 – 15:00 - Session 4: "Coach of the Coach: Train the Coach" (José Couceiro and Rui Lança -Vitória FC)

15:00 – 15:45 - Practical Session 1: "The training of the Soccer Goalkeeper" (Carlos Ribeiro - Vitória FC)

15:45 – 17:00 - Practice Session 2: "Training as a Game Idea" (Tuck and Bruno Dias- SG Sacavenense)

Management rules of the sessions

The theoretical sessions lasted one hour, with 40 minutes for the guests' lecture and the last 20 minutes for discussion and questions. In regard to the practical sessions (except for Goalkeepers), it was also given a total duration of 1 hour, being the first 5 minutes devoted to a

brief introduction of the session, 45 minutes for the actual practice session and the last 10 minutes for discussion and questions.

Resources

Space: The course took place between at the “Salao Nobre” of the Faculty of Human Motricity and at the turf field of the “Complexo Desportivo do Jamor”.

Materials: Soccer balls, pinnies and cones, owned by the Faculty of Human Motricity.

Participants: the active participants for the practical sessions were the students of Football of the Faculty of Human Motricity.

5.3. Event

Session 1: "From Game Plan Analysis: How to Train Strategy?" (Ricardo Santos- National Team A)

In this session, the speaker showed a presentation on the subject in question, explaining his duties in the National Team A, as a scouter. The session focused on the observation and analysis of the opponent, as well as his professional background. He mentioned that the essence of analyzing how does a team play, is to watch them to play, a good amount of games (7 as the reference). He also highlighted that training this role is important, watching many games, in order to improve the competences as an analyst. The speaker also explained the relationship that the analysis process had with training and especially with the game, referring the coherency between these three factors.

Session 2: "The complementary training in Football: Prevention and Empowerment" (José Herculano - Vitória FC)

Professor Jose Herculano began an initial presentation answering questions that clarify his ideas about the subject in question. He presented his way of working and methodology, giving examples, showing exercise videos and interesting quantitative data to support his ideas. The

speaker highlighted the importance of understanding the context and the individual clinic records of each athlete, so the intervention could be adapted to the game model and to the effort model. He mentioned the specificity of the drills done as a key point for the complementary work, with the objective of reducing the risk factors associated to the injuries. This theme gained relevance, because it introduced new ideas and ways of thinking about the work of conditional abilities and how they can boost players' tactical and technical performances.

Session 3: "The formation of the Football player: The Perspective Of The Technical Coordinator"
(João Santos - Technical Coordinator of SL Benfica and Valter Dias - Technical Coordinator of SG Sacavenense)

The orators sought to address various standpoints from the objectives of each club, to the importance of the income of their teams, mainly from the results to the question of recruitment, creating a positive atmosphere of discussion that favored the knowledge of all participants in the session. They talked about the necessity of an improvement in the competitive framework, adapting the competitiveness for the players, while rising the number of hours in the competitive context.

A distinction from both clubs was done regarding the importance of winning. If in one hand SL Benfica tries to compete to win in any championship that contests, emphasizing this factor represented by the phrase "Form to Win". On the other hand, the SG Sacavenense demonstrates to know perfectly its position in the football of formation, recognizes that up to the ages of 13/14 is still able to compete for the championships, but the quantity and quality of resources has a big gap between both realities. However, the evolutive tendencies of the game in the youth development process should be considered and highlighted, instead of focusing in the ideas of the coach. They also talked about the differences of the recruitment between both clubs, since SL Benfica has much more resources than SG Sacavenense.

Session 4: "Coach of the coach: coaching the Coach" (José Couceiro and Rui Lança - Vitória FC)

This theme aimed to clarify this new role, the coach of the coach, that now begins to appear in the coaching staff teams. Both participants had a productive and enriching period of debate, talking about their experience in a team of the Portuguese soccer first league. They highlighted the human relationship in the center of the team management, focusing the importance of acquisition man management skills. The objective of optimizing the leadership and communication skills by reflecting on questions like “What do I do?”, “How can I do it?” and “What are my expectations?”. The intervention with the coaches could be with very specific issues like communication, verbal and nonverbal. With the players, on issues such as concentration, how to motivate and how to overcome.

Professor José Couceiro saw as very positive the integration of a Coach in his coaching staff team and as essential in the performance of the team. He mentioned the importance of a multidisciplinary coaching staff team, optimizing the performances and results in training and competition.

15h00 - 15h45 - Practical Session 1: "The Training of the Football Goalkeeper" (Carlos Ribeiro - Vitória FC)

This was the first practical session, where Ribeiro showed some work done through a competitive microcycle, demonstrating specific exercises to train certain content. He highlighted the importance of integrating and guiding the exercises to the competitive necessities. He also mentioned the importance of projecting the reality and challenges that the goalkeeper is going to face in the following match.

15h45 - 17h00 - Practical Session 2: "Training as a Game Idea" (Tuck and Bruno Dias - SG Sacavenense)

In this last session of the day, Tuck and Dias, that are part of the Sacavenense coaching staff, presented some of their thoughts and ideas about the game, more concrete about the principles of a team's game model. They talked about how to operate the behaviors that they wanted to be implemented in their teams, making a relation between the game model, the ideas of the coach and the context where they will be implemented. All of these ideas should be according to the training model.

They also talked about some small strategic variations in their game model, in order to provide to the team different responses in adversities provoked by the opposing team.

5.4. Balance

The organization of events like this bring to the community excellent learning opportunities and experience sharing, with the target-market being not just the soccer students of the university, but also any other coach interested in the themes presented. The organization of this day it was only possible due to the great resources supported by the Faculty of Human Kinetics.

The orators provided the opportunity to reflect about different ideas on different dimensions in training soccer. Regarding the objectives of the event, they were clearly fulfilled, because during the various sessions, content was presented, interpreted and discussed in all areas of sports, physical, technical, tactical and psychological training.

In addition to all of this, there was a great attending in the event, from all range of coaches, of various functions, and with the presence of many people from outside the university, as well as people who are not directly related to soccer. It was received a very positive feedback after the event. Although, it should be implemented a questionnaire to guests and public who attempts the seminar, so the organization staff will have more feedback and know where can improve in an upcoming event.

6. CONCLUSION/FINAL THOUGHTS

The opportunity to work abroad, in Charleston, South Carolina, United States of America was an awesome experience that offered me the most diversified moments of learning, in contact with athletes of both genders and by all age groups, from 2 to 18 years. I was assumed a lot of on-the-field experience, with contribution in various programs such as juniors program, recreational soccer, elite programs, summer camps, and many others. This opportunity was extremely enriching in many levels, as it forced me to adapt to different cultures, routines and languages. I am very grateful for having this experience.

In the management of the training and competition process, the numerous scenarios faced and experienced provided me very good learning moments, challenging me to find solutions to multiple situations/problems. I had the opportunity to deal with and teach the 9v9 game format for the first time. My intervention as coach wasn't reduced to the coaching of only team, but simultaneously three teams, supporting different programs at the same time. I also had the incredible experience to work with a High School soccer team, which made me familiarized with that reality. The organization and facilities in the High School context in order to promote the practice of sports is amazing, providing the students multiple opportunities to develop their potential as athletes.

I have done a logbook with the purpose of register my daily feelings and thoughts, and I believe that it helped in my improvement, particularly in my self-reflection moments every day. That was a practice that I have adopted before, but only mentally, since I have never registered the events. This was my first experience abroad, dealing with a different culture and notion of soccer. I had to adapt my coaching style to the culture and context, but yet I never lost sight of my own identity and ideas.

In the follow up of the idea of adapting me coaching style to the culture, without losing my identity as a coach, emerged the idea of proposing an adjustment to the planning and organization of soccer in the club (Global Premier Soccer), that could also be adapted in the region, state or country. I truly believe in a game-based approach, recreating with small-sided games and task-constraints, situations that happen in the game. Teaching the tactical side of the game by its moments, phases and principles.

Based on my season planning for the three teams coached, that played the three different game formats (7v7, 9v9 and 11v11), I created a document that suggests an intervention on the youth soccer programs, making an association between the contents to be taught, the development stages and the game formats. I believe that is vital to respect the development stages of the athletes, promoting a progressive transition between them, without promoting a premature specialization.

7. REFERENCES

- Almeida, C., Ferreira, A., Volossovitch, A. (2013). Offensive sequences in youth soccer: effects of experience and small-sided games. *Journal of Human Kinetics*, 36, 97-106. DOI:10.2478/hukin-2013-0010;
- Borges, P., Guilherme, J., Rechenchosky, L., Costa, L., & Rinadi, W. (2017). Fundamental tactical principles of soccer: a comparison of different age groups. *Journal of Human Kinetics*, 58, 207-214. DOI: 10.1515/hukin-2017-0078;
- Castelo, J. (2003). Futebol – *Actividades físicas e desportivas*. Lisboa: Faculdade de Motricidade Humana.;
- Côte, J. & Gilber, W. (2009). An integrative definition of coaching effectiveness and expertise. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 4 (3), 307-323.;
- Cruz, J., Dias, C., Gomes, R., Alves, A., Sá, S., Viveiros, I., Almeida, S. & Pinto, S. (2001). Um programa de formação para eficácia de treinadores da iniciação e formação desportiva. *Análise Psicológica*, 1 (XIX), 171-182.;
- Ferreira, J. & Queiroz, C. (1982). Futebol – da formação à alta competição. *LUDENS*, 8(1), 65-71.;
- Ferreira, J. (1983). Uma direção programática na formação do praticante de futebol. *LUDENS*, 8 (1), 45-53.;
- Ford, P., Ward, P., Hodges, N., & Williams, A. (2009). The role of deliberate practice and play in career progression in sport: the early engagement hypothesis. *High Ability Studies*, 20(1), 65-75. DOI: 10.1080/13598130902860721;
- Garganta, J. (1994). Para uma teoria dos jogos desportivos colectivos. In Graça, A. & Oliveira, J., *O ensino dos jogos desportivos* (pp. 11-25). Porto: Centro de estudos dos jogos desportivos.;
- Garganta, J. (1994). O ensino do futebol. In Graça, A. & Oliveira, J., *O ensino dos jogos desportivos* (pp. 97-137). Porto: Centro de estudos dos jogos desportivos.;
- Garganta, J., & Gréhaigne, J. (1999). Abordagem sistémica do jogo de futebol: moda ou

necessidade? *Movimento*, 5 (10), 40-50.;

Garcia, J., Roman, I., Calleja-González & Dellal, A. (2014). Quantification and analysis of offensive situations in different formats of sided games in soccer. *Journal of Human Kinetics*, vol. 44, 193-201. DOI: 10.2478/hukin-2014-0125;

Korthagen, A. (1999). Linking reflection and technical competence: the logbook as an instrument in teacher education. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 22:2-3, 191-207. DOI: 10.1080/0261976899020191;

Nascimento, L., & Magalhães, R. (2010). *Aprender a jogar Futebol - Um caminho para o Sucesso*. Lisboa: Prime Books.;

Queiroz, C. (1983). Para uma teoria do ensino / treino do futebol. *LUDENS*, 8(1), 25-44.;

Queiroz, C. (1985). *Estrutura e organização dos exercícios de futebol*. Lisboa: ISEF-UTL.;

Ramos, F. (2002). *Futebol da "Rua à competição"*. Lisboa: Centro de Estudos e Formação Desportiva.;

Ribeiro, M. & Volossovitch, A. (2004): *Andebol I: O ensino do andebol dos 7 aos 10 anos*. Lisboa: FMH Edições.;

Villar, L., Araújo, D., Davis, K. & Button, C. (2012). The role of ecological dynamic in analysing performance in team sports. *Sports Med*, 42 (1), 1-10.

Villar, L., Esteves, P., Travassos, B., Passos, P., Lago-Peñas, C. & Davids, K. (2014). Varying numbers of players in small-sided soccer games modifies action opportunities during training. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 9 (5), 1007-1018.